THE CHILDREN'S — KINGDOM —

THOMAS W. DICKERT

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LAURA ELIZABETH DICKERT

The Children's Kingdom

Sermons for the Junior Congregation

By

THOMAS WILSON DICKERT, D.D.

Author of "Sermons for Juniors," etc., Pastor St. Stephen's Reformed Church, Reading, Pa.

With Introduction by

GEORGE W. RICHARDS, D. D., LL. D.,

President of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States Lancaster, Pa.

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This volume of
Junior Sermons
is inscribed with tender affection
to my daughter
Laura Elizabeth Dickert—
familiarly known as Betty—
the youngest member of my
Junior Congregation

INTRODUCTION

JESUS was deeply interested in children and often spoke of them to His followers. He observed them at play. He laid His hands upon them in blessings, when others rebuked them. He set a child in the midst of His disciples, who were disputing with one another on the way, who was the greatest. He told them that to receive a little child was the same as receiving Him and His Father. If one desired to enter the Kingdom, which He proclaimed, he must have the spirit of a child, for of such is the Kingdom of God. The children hailed Him with Hosannas in the Temple the last week of His life, while the chief priests and scribes were moved with indignation at Him. In brief, Jesus discovered the child and set a new value upon him, at a time when life generally, and especially that of children, was lightly esteemed.

What Jesus thought and taught about children, the ripe experience of two thousand years and the wisdom of science have approved. Men, in every sphere of life, are more and more accepting Jesus' valuation of childhood. The teacher, the minister, the social scientist, the moral reformer, and the statesman—all alike feel that the strategic period for the making of men and women who are religious, moral, patriotic, just, and loyal is the plastic age of childhood. For the future of the church and

the state is clearly recognized to be bound up with the childhood and youth of a nation.

If the Church ever forgot the Master's estimate of childhood, the time has come when every possible provision is made for the nurture of children from the day of birth to the period of maturity. For this purpose we have schools of many kinds, some under the supervision of the church and others of the state. Parents and teachers are in close coöperation in the training of the young. During the last thirty years a distinctive children's literature has been produced. Organizations have been founded to develop, by practice as well as by precepts, both the body and the soul of our boys and girls. Laws have been placed upon the statute books to provide ways for advancing the welfare of the child and of protecting him against every form of exploitation.

One of the most recent methods of approach to the children of the churches is through the children's sermon preached in the Sunday morning service before the sermon to adults. Many ministers in the different churches have made this a permanent part of the service, and as a rule this address has been as favorably received by the men and women as by the children.

It is by no means easy to preach to children. Men who may be able to preach with satisfaction to adults, may fail when they attempt to talk to children. In the last ten years, doubtless to meet a widely-felt need among ministers, books of children's sermons have been published and used to

good advantage. Yet this kind of sermon literature is still in its early stage and there is much room for books of this sort.

We are quite sure that all who work for the welfare of children, and of course none more than ministers and Sunday-school superintendents and teachers, will welcome this volume of sermons. The author is fitted by nature, grace, and experience for this kind of preaching. In his mature manhood, rich in pastoral labors and ripe in scholarly attainments, he has none the less maintained the simplicity and sincerity of childhood. He is withal gifted with the art of putting sound thought in a childlike way, without becoming childish. He is a master, also, in the use of illustrations and stories, which invariably illuminate his thought and hold the attention of his young audience and his wider circle of readers. Perhaps one of the best tests of the value of a sermon for children is the degree of interest which it arouses in adults. This test, we believe, the sermons in this volume, as a rule, will meet satisfactorily.

If the publication of these sermons will help others to show boys and girls the truth, the goodness, and the beauty of Jesus and His gospel as the author has done and is doing in his faithful ministry, then his labor of love has not been in vain and the members of his congregation, parents and children, as well as the ministers will rejoice with him in this product of his pen.

GEORGE W. RICHARDS.

Lancaster, Pa.

PREFACE.

BEING greatly gratified by the appreciative reception accorded my first volume of "Sermons for Juniors," and encouraged by the many requests for sermons of a similar character, I send forth this second volume of sermons in the hope that they may be as kindly received as were those of the first volume.

Both children and adults have written to me about the sermons and have spoken of the joy and helpfulness which they have derived from them. Among these letters I prize most highly those of two aged ministers, both of whom have since passed to their eternal reward, one of them writing to me as follows only a short time before his departure: "Permit me to express my appreciation of your junior sermons. I am an aged minister, and the older I become the more I appreciate reading them." And the other urged me very strongly to publish the sermons in book form in order that they might benefit a larger circle of readers.

The subject of one of the sermons, "The Children's Kingdom," is fittingly used as the title of the whole volume, which has to do so largely with the blessings and benefits which accrue to children from a proper appreciation of the fact that the Kingdom belongs to them.

I am greatly indebted to the many sources from which I have received suggestions and stories, and

gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to them. "The field is the world," and nothing is too good for God's children of all ages.

I wish to thank the editor and publishers of the "Reformed Church Messenger," for permission to use these sermons, which were first printed in that excellent religious weekly, and also to express my sincere gratitude to the publishers of this volume for their many courtesies, and to commend them for the large number of excellent books that have come from their press.

T. W. D.

Reading, Pa.

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I

GIVE GOD THE BEST

"All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."—I CHRON. 29:14.

IN beginning a new series of Junior Sermons, we want to start out by making it our rule to give God the best.

Everything we have comes from God. David knew this long ago. When he began to gather the material for the temple which his son Solomon was to build, and the people brought gold and silver and brass and iron and precious stones, he was very glad and sang a hymn of praise to God, in which he used the words of our text, "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."

A long time after this St. James wrote, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."

The best and the greatest gift which God ever gave to the world was His own Son, whose birthday we just celebrated, and all the gifts we gave and all that we received were given because God gave us His wonderful gift. Love shows itself in giving.

When the Wise Men came to worship the child Jesus, they opened their treasures and offered unto Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. They gave Him the best gifts they could find. They felt that nothing was too good for Jesus.

Not everybody has gold to give, and especially not boys and girls; but if every one gives God the best they can give He will be pleased with the gift.

St. Mark and St. Luke tell us the story of the poor widow who put two mites into the treasury. Jesus was watching the people as they brought their offerings and cast them into the treasury. Many that were rich cast in much, but this poor widow cast in two mites, which made less than half a cent. Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said to them, "Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury: for they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

From this story we learn that a small gift is just as dear to Jesus as a large one, if it is the best we have to give and if our heart's love goes with the gift.

Some years ago a minister was married, and the members of the congregation raised a large sum of money to give him a present. Before he went away on a trip a little girl of the congregation came to him and shyly pressed a sticky penny into his hand with the words: "That's your present from me. It's my two Saturdays' money!" The minister thought more of that penny than of all his grand gifts. It meant a great deal for a little girl to deny herself for two weeks to give a gift to the minister.

Some of you have heard the story of the boy who had a dog by the name of Fido, of whom he was very fond. One day as they sat down to eat their dinner, Fido came and sat close beside Harry, looking up into his face as much as to say, "Don't forget that I am here, and that I am hungry, too." Every time Harry looked at him he would wag his tail and beat the floor with it as though he was sure of getting something. When Harry's father passed his plate to him, loaded with chicken, he was about to put it on the floor for Fido, but his father said it was too good for the dog, and that after they were through with the meal he might give Fido something. After the meal was over, Harry's father told him he might gather up the bones and the scraps for Fido. When he had gathered them up and put the plate down, he said: "Fido, I meant to give you an offering, but this is only a collection."

I never say to my congregation: "We will now take up the collection;" but I always say: "The offering of the Congregation will now be received." There is quite a difference between a collection and an offering, and we want to give God the best.

During the past year I helped to open many of the envelopes of the Junior Congregation, and I noticed a great difference in the offerings of the children. Among the best offerings for the year were those of the three daughters of a widow in our congregation, who is a tither, that is, she gives one-tenth of what she earns to the Lord. We use the duplex envelopes in our Junior Congregation and each of the three girls puts five cents on each side of the en-

velope every Sunday—thirty cents a Sunday from the three, or fifteen dollars and sixty cents for the year, half of which goes for missions. And these offerings come from the earnings of a poor widow, who works hard that she may keep her children out of the Orphans' Home and may bring them up herself. And beside this, she is one of the best givers in our congregation.

I noticed, too, that some children put new pennies and nickels and dimes into their envelopes, while others put in black and bent and worn-off coins, as though they thought anything was good enough for God. I have made it my rule for years, when giving an offering in the house of God, to select the nicest and newest coins I can find, because I believe we ought to give God the best.

There is one gift we all have, and which God wants above all other gifts. It is the gift of the heart and its love. If we give God this gift, I am sure we will give Him the best we can whenever we bring Him an offering.

II.

PERFECTION

"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."—MATT. 5:48.

IN this text we are told what we shall be some day, and the sooner we begin to think about it and to prepare for it the better it will be for us.

We do not know what this New Year may have in store for us, but we ought to try and live in such a way that at the end of the year we will be better than we are now and will be nearer to that perfection which God wants us to reach.

I do not know how many of you made New Year resolutions at the beginning of this year. The trouble with such resolutions is that they are so soon and so easily broken, but it is better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all. If your resolutions have been of the right kind, and if you try very hard to keep them, you cannot help but be better at the end of the year than you were at the beginning.

Nobody reaches perfection in this life, but every one ought to keep his eye fixed upon it as the goal which he hopes some day to reach.

I am sure we all feel like the great painter in New York City. A friend came into his studio one day and looked at the many beautiful pictures he had painted. At last he asked the painter which

of all his paintings was the best. He took his friend to the other side of the room and showed him a large piece of white canvas stretched in a beautiful frame, and said: "That is my best picture."

What do you think he meant? There was no picture there. No brush had ever touched that canvas. The great artist meant to say that the best of his pictures was not yet painted, but that it was in his mind and heart as a beautiful image which he hoped some day to put upon the canvas, and that would be his masterpiece.

Turning to his friend, the painter said: "I am sorry I cannot show you that picture. I am always trying, but it still creeps ahead of me. I have painted it there in my mind a thousand times, and some day perhaps I will be able to paint it as I see it."

That painter dreamed of perfection, but he had never painted the perfect picture. When he finished one picture, it was not as perfect as he wanted it to be, and not as perfect as the next one would be. But was it not a grand thing that he had the idea of perfection before him?

Did you ever have a perfect lesson in school, or do anything that you thought was perfect? Do you not always feel that you can do still better? There are some problems in arithmetic which, if done correctly, will be perfect. There is only one way to do them, and only one answer is correct. But when we have to do with the higher things of life it is different. We may build a house in a year and have it almost perfect, but it takes a lifetime

to build a character and then we feel that it is not perfect.

I do not believe God wants us to be satisfied unless we do our very best. We ought to feel like the painter, that our best picture has not yet been painted, that our best work has not yet been done, that our best character has not yet been formed.

A great English poet by the name of Robert Browning once wrote these words:

"Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be;
The last of life for which the first was made."

Life's best always ought to be in the future, for God and Heaven lie on before us.

In Christ we can see what God wants us to be. He was perfect, as God wants us to be. We must try to be like Him more and more every day, and some day we shall be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.

When we think we are at our best, let us see how nearly we are like Him and we shall see that we still have far to go to reach perfection.

One day an English minister was visiting one of his members—a washerwoman—who was just finishing her day's work. As he saw the clothes hanging on the line in the little yard he thought they looked very clean and white, and he said to the woman: "A very fine wash you are hanging out." I am sure that the good woman felt very proud with it. They went inside the house, and after remaining awhile the minister came to the door

to leave. He saw that it had snowed while he was in the house and the ground was white, although the air was clear. "Ah!" he said to the woman, "your clothes do not look as white as they did!" "O, sir," said the woman, "the clothes are all right, but what can stand against God Almighty's white?"

God's spotlessness is our pattern and ideal. His work is perfect, and He wants us to do our best. If you, boys and girls, therefore begin to do your best every day, whether at work, at study, or at play, you will find that you will make the best of life, and that some day you will be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

III.

THE BIBLE

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet."—PSALM 119:105.

THE Bible is the most wonderful book in the world. But it is more than a book; it is a library of sixty-six books. There are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New Testament.

One of the best memory exercises for boys and girls of the Junior Congregation age is to learn by heart the names of the books of the Bible in their order. If you learn them now, you may never forget them. I learned these names when I was young, and I remember them today.

I read about a boy today who repeated the seventeenth chapter of John at a school examination, when he was only five years old, and he received a story book as his prize.

The books of the Bible were written by many different men who lived at different periods in the world's history. Among them were lawgivers, historians, shepherds, kings, priests, farmers, tent-makers, poets, fishermen, doctors and ministers, but all of them were good men. The Old Testament books were mostly written in Hebrew, and the New Testament books in Greek.

The chapter from which our text is taken is one of the most wonderful chapters of the Bible. It

is the longest chapter in the Bible. It has one hundred and seventy-six verses. It has been called "The Golden Alphabet," because it is divided into twenty-two sections of eight verses each, and every section has over it a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which has twenty-two letters in all, while our alphabet, as you know, has twenty-six letters.

But if you look into a Hebrew Bible you will notice something which you do not find in the English Bible. The chapter is written in Hebrew poetry, and every one of the eight verses in every one of the twenty-two sections begins with the same letter. The first eight verses begin with Aleph, which is the Hebrew letter A. The next eight verses begin with Beth, which is the Hebrew letter B. The next eight verses begin with Gimel, which is the Hebrew letter G. (They have no C in their alphabet.) The next eight verses begin with Daleth, which is the Hebrew letter D. And so it goes on through the whole chapter and the whole Hebrew alphabet.

Another wonderful thing about this Psalm is that every one of the one hundred and seventy-six verses tells something about the word or the law of God. The subject of the Psalm in the American Revised Version is "Meditations and Prayers relating to the Law of God." You could play a very interesting game by seeing who could get the largest number of names for the word of God, or the law of God, out of this Psalm in the shortest time. Here are the ones found in the first eight verses, using the same word only once: law, testimonies, ways, pre-

cepts, statutes, commandments, judgments. The word "statutes" is used twice here, in the fifth and in the eight verses.

In the verse from which our text is taken the writer says:

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
And a light unto my path."

But if we want the Bible to be a lamp unto our feet, and light unto our path, we must use it. We must read it, and study it, and walk in its light.

We often find people having a large family Bible on the table in the sitting room or in the parlor, and above it usually hangs a light. Often it is the only Bible they have. It is so large that it is hard to handle, and is very seldom read. Sometimes the children look at its wonderful pictures, or the father or mother write into it the name of a child who was born, baptized, married, or buried.

The Bible can give no more light to the members of the family unless it is read than can the chandelier or hanging lamp above it unless it is lit.

The writer of this Psalm knew how to use the word of God so that it would help him. In the eleventh verse of this Psalm he says:

"Thy word have I laid up in my heart,
That I might not sin against Thee."

And how good it would be if many persons would have the same feeling toward the Word of God as he shows in the ninety-seventh verse, where he says:

"Oh how I love Thy law!
It is my meditation all the day."

If every boy and girl would begin to do that early in life, how much happier they would be when they grow up to be men and women.

There was once a Japanese boy by the name of Yoshio, who went to a mission school. He was given a beautiful Bible by a Japanese friend. He thought he had never seen such a beautiful book in his life, and he loved it dearly. He could not speak English as well as Japanese, but this is what he said: "From the next day I used to pray to God first, 'Pray, let me understand Thy Holy Book.' And I read it every morning and night. First I started the New Testament, but many references were on the edges of each page. They all were quoted from the Old Testament. I thought it was better to read from the very beginning of Genesis. So I did."

Surely, if this Japanese boy could read his Bible through, then every American boy and girl can do the same. Make it the rule of your life to read the Bible every day. If you read a chapter every day, it will take you about three years and a quarter to read the whole Bible through. If you want to read it through in one year, you can do so by reading three chapters every week-day and five chapters every Sunday.

King George V of England promised his mother, Queen Alexandra, over forty years ago, that he would read a chapter of the Bible each day, and he has kept that promise faithfully.

IV.

"WHAT'S IN A NAME?"

"And he called his name Jesus."—MATT. 1:25.

IN the beautiful story of "Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare makes Juliet say:

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet."

Every name has a meaning. Your first name, which is called your Christian name, has a meaning; and there is no doubt a reason why that name was given to you. Your middle name, if you have one, has a meaning. Your last name, the family name, called the surname, has a meaning.

You did not choose your own name, but it was given you by your parents or by some friend of the family. Your family name belongs to you because you are a son or a daughter of your parents, and you bear the family name of your father.

These family names all have their meaning. They come from the kind of work that was done by the first man of that name, or from the place where he lived, or from some office he held, or from some particular thing or event that happened in his life. It is not hard to find out where some family names come from, such as Smith, Cooper, Carpenter, Baker, and Taylor.

Do you know the meaning of your family name, or what it comes from? If you do not, you will

have something interesting to work upon when you grow a little older.

The story is told that three brothers by the name of Klein came to this country from Germany. No doubt the first man by that name was so called because he was a small man, small in stature. One of the brothers settled in Pennsylvania, and kept the family name of Klein. Another brother went up to Massachusetts and settled there, but he changed his name to Little, the English for Klein. The third brother went South and settled in Maryland, and he changed his name to Small, which is another translation for Klein. And now we have many families all over our country by the name of Klein, Small, and Little.

Your first and middle names, which are called your Christian names, were given to you at your baptism. You were given those names for some special reason. Perhaps you were named for some special person, or the name was given because your father or mother liked it very much. Sometimes a boy must be given the names of his two grandfathers, or a girl must be named after her two grandmothers. Sometimes a boy is named after the President of the United States who happens to be in office at the time. There are all kinds of reasons for giving all kinds of names to children.

Did you ever look up the meaning of your Christian name? These names all have a meaning. I cannot take the time and space to give the meaning of all the names, but I am going to give you the

meaning of a number of the most common names of boys and girls:

Aaron—lofty, inspired. Albert—nobly bright, illustrious. Alfred—good counselor. Andrew—strong, manly. Arthur—high, noble. Agnes—chaste, pure. Amanda—worthy to be loved. Amelia—busy, energetic. Benjamin—son of the right hand. Beatrice—making happy. Bertha—bright, beautiful. Blanche — white. Charles — strong, manly. Clarence—illustrious. Clara—bright, illustrious. Daniel—a divine judge. David—beloved. Dorothy—the gift of God. Edward—guardian of property. Eugene—well-born, noble. Edith—happiness. Elizabeth—worshiper of God. Esther—a star, good fortune. Ethel—noble. Eva—life. Frank—free. Frederick—abounding in peace. Florence—blooming, flourishing. George—a landholder. Harold—a champion. Henry—the head or chief of a house. Herbert—glory of the army. Hannah—grace. Helen—light. Ira—watchful. Ida—godlike. James—a supplanter. John—the gracious gift of God. Joseph—he shall add. Lewis—bold warrior. Laura—a laurel. Martin—warlike. Margaret—a pearl. Martha—the ruler of the house. Mary—star of the sea. Nathan—a gift. Nathaniel—gift of God. Oscar—bounding warrior. Paul—little. Peter—a rock. Philip—a lover of horses. Ralph—hero. Richard—powerful. Robert—bright in fame. Rebecca—of enchanting beauty. Ruth—beauty. Samuel—heard of God. Sarah—a princess. Theodore—the gift of God. Thomas—a twin. Victor—

a conqueror. Virginia—pure. Walter—ruling the host. William—protector.

The name of Jesus also has a special meaning. Before Jesus was born, an angel came to Joseph and said to him about Mary: "And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His name JESUS; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins." The name Jesus means Savior. He was also called Christ, which means "anointed." A Christian, as our Catechism says, is a "member of Christ." St. Luke tells us "that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

The Bible tells us: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." No matter what your first name, or middle name, or family name may be, see to it that you make it a good name, so that when your name is mentioned people will say: "He is a good boy;" "She is a good girl."

As I began this sermon with a quotation from Shakespeare, so I want to end it with one, taken from the story of "Othello," where Iago says:

"Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed."

V.

WHEN ABRAHAM LINCOLN WAS A BOY

"And I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing."—GEN. 12:2.

WHEN God called Abraham, whose name at first was Abram, He said unto him: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

God might have said all those words to Abraham Lincoln, because he was in many ways like the man whose name he bore. He was born in Kentucky on Sunday, February 12, 1809, one hundred and fifteen years ago. Like Abraham, he left the section of country where he was born, because, when he was seven years old, the family moved into the State of Indiana, and fourteen years later they moved to Illinois.

And as God promised to the Abraham of the Bible, so He did to Abraham Lincoln: "I will bless thee, and make thy name great." God did bless Abraham Lincoln in a wonderful way, and He made his name great, so that today his name

is placed alongside that of George Washington, and these two are called the greatest Americans.

God also said: "And be thou a blessing." We need only read the story of Abraham Lincoln's life and the many kind things he did, to see that he was a great blessing. He took away from our country one of the greatest curses we ever had—the curse of slavery.

And even when God said: "I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse," it was true of Abraham Lincoln. Many of the people of our country blessed Abraham Lincoln for what he had done for them, and especially the slaves whom he had freed; and they were greatly blessed.

God did not say: "And *them* that curse thee will I curse," but He said: "And *him* that curseth thee will I curse." Abraham Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth on the evening of April 14, 1865, and he died the next day, aged fifty-six years, two months and three days. But the curse of God rested on the murderer. He had to flee for his life, and had to hide like a fox, and twelve days afterward he was shot in a barn.

But the last of God's promises to Abraham is the most wonderful of all: "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This also is true of Abraham Lincoln. What he did for our country,—to give the people liberty, righteousness, justice and peace,—our country is now trying to do for the world. That is what the great Conference at Washington was for,—to bring to other nations what

Abraham Lincoln and men like him have given to us.

But what the members of the Junior Congregation want to know is what kind of a boy it was who became so great a man as Abraham Lincoln.

He was a poor boy, born in a log cabin of the rudest sort, with a single room, a single window, a big fireplace and a large outside chimney. In our country, a poor boy and a poor girl may make their mark in life if they have the right spirit and are willing to do their part.

He had a good mother, who taught him and his sister, Sarah, to spell and to read, and told them Bible and fairy stories. But when he was nine and a half years old, in the fall of 1818, his mother died. She called her children to her bedside, and laying her feeble hand on her boy's head, she said: "I am going to leave you, Abe,—and, oh, how hard it is to part with you. I know that you will be a good boy; that you will be kind to Sarah and to your father. I want you to live as I have taught you, and to love your Heavenly Father. I am thankful God gave you to us. Love everybody, hinder nobody, never lie, never drink, and the world will be glad some day that you were born."

Is it any wonder that a boy with such a mother became a great man, and that he said long afterward: "All that I am, and all that I hope to be, I owe to my angel mother?" Many a boy has given his mother credit for his greatness. Benjamin West once said: "A kiss from my mother made me an artist."

He did not have much schooling, but he made wonderful use of the time he spent in school, which did not make more than one solid year in all. One of his schoolmates said that he was a very bright boy at school, and made great progress in his studies. Though he was quite young, he studied very hard, and learned faster than any of his schoolmates.

He was very fond of reading, and in that way he gained an education which surprised the world. He had only a few books, but these he knew by heart. Among them were the Bible, "Aesop's Fables," "Pilgrim's Progress," "Robinson Crusoe," "The Life of George Washington," and a few others. He walked twelve miles to get a grammar, and he kept it right with him until he knew it by heart. There was nothing in it he did not know. When he was President of the United States, he made an address at the dedication of the Gettysburg Cemetery which is used in the universities of England as a model of English speaking.

He was always truthful and honest, so that he became known as "Honest Abe." Many stories are told of his kindness to animals and to everybody in need or in distress. In everything he did he honored the memory of his mother, and God honored him for it.

He also had a good step-mother. She paid him one of the finest tributes he ever received from any one, something of which any boy in our day might well be proud: "I can say, what scarcely one mother in a thousand can say: Abe never gave me

a cross word or look, and never refused to do anything I asked him. I must say, Abe was the best boy I ever saw or expect to see." And she had sons of her own!

These are some of the things that helped to make Abraham Lincoln a great man, whose name is loved and honored by the whole world.

VI.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

"Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints."—PSALM 116:15.

WE celebrate the birthdays of some men and the deathdays of others. On the twelfth of this month we celebrate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, and on the twenty-second that of George Washington. But on the fourteenth we celebrate the deathday of St. Valentine.

We do not know when or where St. Valentine was born; indeed, we know very little about him. He was a priest in Rome and a very good man. He loved God, young men and maidens, and little children.

Some one has given this definition of a saint: "A saint is a good person who loves God and his fellow man—any one who loves twice, one love to God and one love to man; any one who loves twice is a saint."

St. Valentine was a Roman heathen at first, but one day he became a Christian. He was arrested and persecuted for being a Christian, and a very bright man was asked to try to win him back from Christianity to idolatry. This man had a beautiful girl who was blind. St. Valentine loved the little girl and told her about flowers and birds and many other pretty things. He asked God for power to

make her happy. God gave him power to open her eyes. The result was that her father and all his family became Christians and were baptized. This made the heathen hate St. Valentine more and more, and on February fourteenth, about the year 270, they beat him with clubs and cut off his head.

St. Valentine had nothing to do with the customs connected with his day. Some of these customs were observed in ancient Rome before Christ was born, and before there were either saints or saints' days.

It seems that St. Valentine's Day took the place of a heathen festival called Lupercalia, in honor of Lupercus, "the wolf destroyer." It was at this festival that the custom arose which hundreds of years afterwards was very popular in England and France in connection with St. Valentine's Day.

On the evening before St. Valentine's Day young people met in a social way and spent a pleasant evening together. Among the things they did was the placing into some vessel of a select number of the names of the young women present by an equal number of the young men, after which each young man drew out the name of a young woman who became his *valentine* for a year.

It is said that this custom arose from the fact that about this time of the year the birds of England choose their mates.

Besides the choosing of a person for a valentine for the year, it became the custom in England for the two persons who were valentines to exchange presents. Afterwards it became the practice for the

gentlemen only to give a present. Usually some verses, or at least a motto, went with the present. In the course of time the verses were sent without any present, and this is the way the day is mostly celebrated now.

An old traveler tells us that in some parts of England it was the custom on St. Valentine's Day for the children to meet together in some part of the town where they lived, and to go to the house of the principal man of the place, who from his window threw wreaths and true lover's knots, with which they decorated themselves. They then chose the youngest boy in the company and decked him out more gaily than the rest. Placing him at their head, they marched forward and sang this Valentine's song:

"Good morrow to you, St. Valentine,
Curl your locks as I do mine,
Two before and three behind;
Good morrow to you, St. Valentine."

In olden times, in England, much time was spent in the writing of valentines. Some very beautiful messages were written, and those who received them were made very happy. The practice of sending ugly valentines is a much later one, for which there is no excuse. The day is intended only for the sending of pleasant messages.

Let us all try to catch the spirit of St. Valentine, who was kind even to his enemies. Remember how happy he made one of his enemies by opening the eyes of his little blind girl.

Millions of valentine postcards are sent every

year, while many of the finer and fancier ones, with hearts and cupids and paper lace and love verses, are also sent.

With the beautiful poem, which someone has written as a tribute to St. Valentine, I close my sermon:

"Oh, good St. Valentine,
We lift our voice in praise;
May long, long life be thine,
Oh, good St. Valentine,
This is thy day of days.
Day when each true love sends
A message from the heart;
Day when good friends greet friends,
And Cupid shoots his dart;
Oh, good St. Valentine,
This is thy day of days."

VII.

WHEN GEORGE WASHINGTON WAS A BOY

"Them that honor me I will honor."—I SAM. 2:30.

THE same God that said, "Honor thy father and thy mother," also said "Them that honor me I will honor."

When George Washington was a boy he honored his parents and his God, and that is why God honored him and made of him a great man. If we had more boys and girls who honored their parents, we should have more men and women who honored God.

George Washington was born near the Potomac River, in Virginia, February 22, 1732. Some of you boys and girls will help to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of his birth eight years from now, and you ought to read some good "Life" of Washington before that time so that you may know more about him.

When Abraham Lincoln was a boy he read Weems' "Life of Washington," and it helped him a great deal in becoming the great man he was. Perhaps he felt what Henry W. Longfellow afterward wrote in the poem, "The Psalm of Life":

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime;
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

Many stories are told of George Washington when he was a boy, but whether all of them are true or not we do not know. But of one thing we are sure, and that is that he loved and honored his parents, and especially his mother.

His father died when George was only eleven years old. He kissed his children in turn, and said to George: "Be good to your mother." His father was looked upon as a rich man in those days, so that George Washington enjoyed more of the comforts of life as a boy than Abraham Lincoln did.

He went to school a great deal more than Lincoln did, but he was not as fond of reading as Lincoln was, and never became as great a speaker as Lincoln. At first he rode to school on horseback in front of a negro servant, but later he had a pony of his own, of which he was very proud.

His step-brother was a soldier, and young George was early fired with the military spirit, and in his school days he became the leader in the boyish battles that they fought. One day he thrashed a boy who had hurt him, although the boy was four or five years older than himself and much larger.

There are two stories which I want to tell about Washington, and both of them have to do with his love and honor for his mother.

When he was still a boy, his step-brother, who was now Captain Lawrence Washington, wanted George to enter the British Navy, and, after much coaxing, got his mother's consent to let him go. His

small trunk was packed and taken to the battleship, and young George had proudly tried on his new uniform and was getting ready to say farewell, when his mother broke down and begged him not to forsake her in her loneliness. He had his heart set on going, but he could not bear to see his mother weeping like that, so he gave up his plans and remained at home with his mother.

He honored his mother, and God honored him and made his name great. If he had gone against the wish of his mother, the history of our country might be very different from what it is, and the name of George Washington might not be loved and honored by the whole world as it is today.

He became a great general and helped to win the freedom of the colonies, and to form a new nation whose first President he became.

It is said that during the Revolutionary War one of his officers was seeking horses in Virginia for the colonial army. This officer was a proud fellow, and one day he saw a fine pair of horses in a field hitched to a plow which was used by a negro slave. The officer said to the slave: "I'll have to claim those horses. I've been looking for such animals for a long time." The slave grinned, and went on with his plowing.

The officer waited until another furrow had been finished, when he went up to the colored man and showed him the sign of his rank. This made the slave afraid. "Lordy," he said, "but you'd better see de missis! She's over yonder." His black hand pointed to a fine old mansion standing among the

trees, and with a parting glance at the splendid horses, the officer made his way toward the mansion. He rapped loudly with the brass knocker upon the door of the old mansion, and soon found himself in the fine old drawing room, where he was met by a grave and majestic looking woman.

"Madam," he said, bowing very low, "I have come to claim your horses in the name of the government." "My horses," she repeated, giving him a sharp look. "Sir, you cannot have my horses. My crops are out, and my horses are needed in the fields." "I am very sorry, madam," was the polite answer, "but the orders of my chief are positive." "And who is your chief?" The officer seemed to grow taller, while his whole person swelled with pride. "My chief, madam," he replied, "is the commander of the American army, General George Washington." A smile softened the handsome face of the old woman; then the answer came gently, but firmly: "Tell George Washington that his mother says he cannot have her horses." The officer apologized humbly, and turned away. Washington's mother knew that her son still honored her.

George Washington also honored God in prayer and in worship. I sat in the pew in which he sat to worship God in the old Episcopal Church in Alexandria, Virginia, and stood in the pulpit from which the Word of God was proclaimed to him. During the Revolutionary War he sometimes worshiped in the Reformed Church at Germantown, where his army was stationed at the time.

While his army was in winter quarters at Valley

Forge, he was found one day on his knees in the woods engaged in earnest prayer. He honored God, and God honored him.

If we can have men who honor God in charge of our national affairs, and if all the men and women and children of our country will learn to honor Him, He will surely honor us as a nation and will make us a blessing to the nations of the world.

VIII.

CHILD WELFARE

"Is it well with the child?—II Kings 4:26.

AT no other time in the world's history has so much been done for the welfare of children as is being done at the present time. This is the children's age, and they are beginning to come to their own.

God wants all children to be well and good and happy. Jesus said long ago, "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." It took the world a long time to get to the point where Jesus wanted it to be. It is only beginning to get there now.

Jesus always was the Friend of children. When mothers brought their little children to Him, that He should lay His hands on them and pray, and the disciples rebuked them, Jesus said: "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven."

And when the disciples came unto Jesus, and asked Him, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called to him a little child and set him in the midst of them, and said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

That is how He answered their question. But He said more than this. He said, "And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me; but whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea."

We know from all this that God wants the children to be well cared for, and whatever is done for the good of their bodies and their minds and their spirits will be pleasing to Him. It is really the spirit of Christ getting abroad in the world more and more, that has led men and women to work for the welfare of the children.

In many of our cities we have baby welfare stations, where the little children may be brought once a week so that the doctors and the nurses may look at them and tell the mothers whether they are all right or what should be done for them to make them better. In this way much is done for the welfare of the children so as to help them to grow in a healthful way and to save them from as much sickness and suffering as possible.

We may say in answer to the question asked in our text, "Is it well with the child?" It is well with the child that is born into a Christian home, and has the care of a Christian mother.

This question was first asked by Elisha, the great prophet of Israel, about a little boy whom he asked God to bring into the home of a good man and woman in Shunem, who had been kind to him and

gave him a room in their home and food whenever he came that way.

They did not have any children, and one day, after Elisha had stopped with them, he said, just as he was about to leave, that they would have a little son. His promise came true, and the little boy was certainly welcome in that home. It was well with him because he had such a good father and mother, who did all they could for his welfare and happiness.

But when he was quite a boy he went out one day into the harvest field to see his father and the reapers, and he had a sunstroke. They quickly took him home to his mother, and in a short time he died on her lap.

She was very sad, and she took him and laid him on the bed where Elisha used to sleep, and closed the door and went out. She hurried to Elisha, who lived quite a distance from there, and when he saw her coming he knew that something was wrong. He asked her, "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?" And she answered, "It is well."

She told Elisha her trouble, and he went home with her and brought the boy back to life again, and gave him to his mother. Even if the boy had not been brought back to life, it would have been well with him, for "God doeth all things well," and the little ones who are with Him are well off.

There are some children in this world with whom it is not well, because they are born into homes where they are not welcome or where they do not

receive the love and care which are necessary for a child's welfare. The condition of children in heathen lands is very sad, and we ought to do all that we can to send them the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that they may soon enjoy some of the blessings which are ours every day and which make it well for us and our children.

It is well with the child that receives the proper care, so that its body may grow strong and beautiful, its mind may be filled with useful knowledge, and its spirit may become Christlike. This requires much love and attention, which no one can give to a child so well as a good Christian mother.

It is well with the child that is helped to form good habits, to be kind in spirit, and to be useful in life.

It is well with the child that, when sickness and trouble come, has a good mother to take it on her lap and to minister to it.

It is well with the child that has been taught to love God in such a way that, even though He should see fit to take it in His arms and carry it in His bosom into the "home for little children above the bright blue sky," it would fear no evil, but would look upon Him as a dearer Friend than even the mother herself.

It is well with the average child in our country today, with all that is being done for it by the home, the public school, the Sunday school, the Church, and the community. And it will be better with all the children of the world as the Gospel spreads and the will of God is done on earth as it is done in heaven.

IX.

"SAY IT WITH FLOWERS"

"His lips are as lilies."—THE SONG OF SOLOMON. 5:13.

A SLOGAN that is used a great deal by the florists of our day is: "Say it with flowers." We see it on their delivery wagons, on their show windows, and on some of the cards they tie to the bouquets that are sent out.

Many persons send flowers to funerals after their friends have passed away. Sometimes the family sends out notices that read: "Please omit flowers." We all know that the dead body cannot see the flowers, however beautiful they may be; cannot smell their fragrance; and cannot hear the message of love and friendship that they are meant to bring.

It is much better to send the flowers to our friends while they live,—when the eyes are able to enjoy their beauty, when they can smell their sweet fragrance, and when they are able to hear and understand the message they bring.

It is a fine thing to say it with flowers, when we want to say to our friends that we love them, that we care for them, that we sympathize with them when they are sick, and that we want to give them cheer and encouragement. The flowers speak a beautiful language, and bring a message that makes the heart glad.

God has a way of saying with flowers how much He loves us. Of course, He speaks to us in many other ways to show His love for us and His goodness toward us. But the flowers are among the many messengers who speak to us of His love. And He sends the flowers in such large numbers that we are almost overcome by His bounty. He fills the meadows with daisies and buttercups, and carpets the lawns and the fields with dandelions, and sends other beautiful flowers by the millions, and all of them bring us a message of love and of cheer.

We are looking forward to the coming of the Spring, when Nature wakes up from her winter nap and puts on her beautiful garments, and when flowers and birds speak to us and sing to us of God's goodness and mercy.

The florists with their hot-houses produce flowers for us during the cold winter months, so that we are able to say to our friends with flowers that we love them and wish them well. But we must not forget that it is really God who gives us these flowers as well as those with which He adorns the fields and the meadows.

The florist who works with God is able to take a common flower, like the aster that grows in the garden, and to change it into a large and beautiful chrysanthemum. No florist can make a plant or a flower. God alone can do that, but the florists have done wonderful things with flowers, and they are able to make many beautiful bouquets and designs.

Flowers are said to speak a language. It is some-

times called "the poetical meaning of flowers." We all know that the rose stands for love. The violet is said to denote modesty and faithfulness; the lily-of-the-valley, purity and delicacy; the sweet pea, unequaled charms; the chrysanthemum, truth; the lilac, youthful innocence; the carnation, woman's love; the tulip, enchantment; the peony, bashfulness; the pansy, tender thoughts and fond remembrance; and the daisy, innocence, peace, hope. Other flowers have other meanings and bring other messages.

We read in a beautiful story how God spoke to one man through a flower. It happened more than a hundred years ago, in a prison in France.

When the great Napoleon was Emperor of France he put many persons into prison because they were not pleased with the way he did things. One of these was a man who was very wise and a good scholar, but he did not believe in God. He thought God had forgotten all about him, so he could forget about God, and he wrote on the walls of his prison cell the words: "All things come by chance."

One day, as he was walking up and down his cell, he saw a tiny green blade breaking through the ground. This was the only living thing he had to look at, and he took a great interest in it and watered it every day. After a while a flower came out. It was white and purple and rose-colored, with a beautiful white fringe. The man began to think and wonder, and after a while thoughts of God came into his heart. He rubbed out the words

he had written on the wall, and wrote these words instead: "He who made all things is God."

He felt happier after that, and began to think that if God could care for the little flower in the prison cell and make it so beautiful, He could care for him. God was saying to him with this flower that He loved him.

A little girl often came to the prison to see her father, who was also a prisoner, and she became acquainted with the man who had the flower in his cell. She told others how kind this man was to his little flower, and at last the story reached the ears of Josephine, the beautiful wife of Napoleon. She thought that a man who could so love a little flower could not be a bad man, and she asked Napoleon to set him free. When he left the prison he took the little flower with him and planted it in his own garden, and cared for it very tenderly. It was his little teacher, for it had taught him to love God and to trust Him.

X.

THE COME-BACK

"Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days."—Eccl. 11:1.

THERE is a toy which is called the come-back. If you roll it away from you, it will come back to you again. Children derive a great deal of pleasure from this toy, because they can sit down and play with it a long time without having to run after it a great deal.

There is also a kind of top which when made to spin will throw off a disc of card, which mounts up in curving flight high in the air, and then comes around and down to the place from which it started, so that the person spinning the top can catch it with the hand. This is also a kind of come-back.

The ancient Australians had a weapon, called the boomerang, which acted almost the same way as these toys. It was a sickle-shaped weapon, made of wood, and in some countries of ivory or steel, varying in length from six inches to three or four feet. It had to be thrown with the right hand, and would travel thirty yards or more, then make a circle of fifty or more yards in diameter, and return to the thrower. A certain writer says, "The return boomerang is chiefly used as a plaything or for killing birds, and is often as dangerous to the thrower as to the object at which it is aimed."

Our thoughts, words, and actions often act like a come-back or a boomerang. If they are good and kind and helpful, they often bring us blessings as well as the persons toward whom they are directed. If they are cruel and spiteful, and inflict suffering upon others, they often bring to us the same in the end.

You have heard the story of the boy and the echo. He came to his father one day and said that there was a boy across the creek who was saucy and said unkind things to him. The father understood very well what was the matter. He took his boy out into the field and told him to say kind words to the boy on the other side, and, as a result, the boy called back kind words to him. It was only the echo of his own words which the boy had heard from the other side. It acted like a boomerang that came back to himself.

There was once a tyrant, who tortured the people he did not like. One day one of his subjects brought to him a new instrument of torture, in the form of a hollow bull. The person to be punished was to be placed inside the hollow animal, and when a fire was lit underneath, his moans and cries would be something like the noise a bull would make. The tyrant was pleased with this novel instrument of torture, and at once ordered the man who had invented it to be the first person put inside to see how it worked.

But it is much pleasanter to think of the bright side of this rule, to see how the good we do comes back to us with blessing. In one of His beatitudes our Savior says, "Blessed are the merciful: for they

shall obtain mercy." This does not mean that the mercy will always come back to us from the persons to whom we have been merciful, but it means that merciful people will find mercy from others, and especially from God Himself.

A come-back comes back at once, and a boomerang returns to the thrower very soon, but our text says: "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days." We ought not to look for a return of our kind acts at once; it will come in God's own time and in God's own way.

Many years ago an English boy was going along the road with a heavy bundle, which he was taking to a seaport from which he intended to sail to America. A coach came along the road, and a lady passenger took pity on him and paid his fare on the coach, and talked kindly to him about his future.

A long time afterward, having been successful in life, he had a desire to return to his old home. When he landed on the other side, he took the coach to his home town. As they went on their way he saw an old woman trudging along the road, and, remembering how he had been helped many years before, he stopped the coach and had her taken up at his expense. As they talked with each other, he found out, to his great surprise, that it was the same woman who had helped him when he was a boy. She had lost her money and was now poor. He was kind to her and helped her, so that she was able to spend the remainder of her life in comfort. The bread she had cast upon the waters came back to her after many days.

XI.

THE CHILDLIKENESS OF JESUS

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. 18:3.

WE have read and heard a great deal about "The Manliness of Christ," "The Godliness of Christ," "The Kingliness of Christ," and "The Brotherliness of Christ," but have we ever thought of "The Childlikeness of Christ?" That is what I want to preach about this time.

At the very outset I want to remind you that there is a great difference between childlikeness and childishness. We expect little children to be childish, but no one would wish grown up men and women to be childish. Paul says: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child." In other words he means to say: "When I was a child, I was childish;" but then he adds: "Now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things." But he had not put away childlikeness, which is a quality that belongs to all great men.

Jesus being the greatest and most perfect of all men had the quality of childlikeness more than any one else, and more perfectly. And when He says in our text: "Except ye turn, and become as little

children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven," He means that we must cultivate childlikeness, which is one of the necessary qualities of the Christian life. And Jesus does not ask anything of us which He did not Himself possess, and in a perfect way.

The famous sculptor, Dannecker, after working on his great statue of Christ, thought it was about as good as he could make it, and he took a little girl into his studio to look at it, and asked her what she thought of it. After standing in front of the statue and looking at it some moments, she said: "He was a great man." And the great sculptor was disappointed. That was not the ideal he had set before himself. Again he went bravely to work, toning down this line and that, putting a different look into the face, until it seemed to him the statue was about what he wanted it to be. He brought the little girl in again, and as she looked upon the wonderful statue, she at once cried out: "That was the Christ who said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me!'" And the sculptor was satisfied. In his first effort he had brought out the manliness of Christ, but in the loving touches he put upon it afterward, he brought out His childlikeness.

Jesus Himself was once a little child, and He was a natural and normal child, and I suppose He did what may be called childish things, and did them perfectly. But at an earlier day than other children He put away childish things, because His life's duty dawned upon Him as a boy of twelve, and He had

higher than childish thoughts and feelings from that time on.

But Jesus showed in His life and work as a man that He had all the childlike qualities which help to make men great and good. We want to look at a few of these childlike traits now.

Sincerity. A little child will always speak the truth, and sometimes to the discomfort of the parents. One of the greatest qualities in the character of Jesus was His sincerity. He meant what He said, and He said what He meant.

Trustfulness. Little children trust everybody, and especially their parents. A woman once said to the little daughter of the missionary Judson: "Were you not afraid to journey so far over the ocean?" "Why, no, madam," said the believing child, "father prayed for us!" What a wonderful trust Jesus had in His Father! He took God at His word. This is a quality which all men and women should cultivate.

Innocence. We all speak of the sweet and beautiful innocence of children. The innocence of children is more perfect than any other on earth. The purity of most men and women is not that which has been kept clean, but that which has been made clean. Jesus never did any wrong nor committed any sin, therefore His innocence was childlike because He kept it clean all His life.

Humility. Little children are naturally humble. It is only when they have been spoiled by their parents and friends that they become proud. Jesus was meek and lowly, and humble in spirit. He

washed the disciples' feet to teach them the lesson of humility.

Simplicity. In their normal state children live a simple life, and if they would be rightly kept and trained, they would retain much of that sweet simplicity throughout life. Jesus always lived the simple life. He did not indulge in the luxuries and excesses which ruin so many persons.

Obedience. This is one of the most important qualities of child-life, and when children do not possess it, the parents are to blame. This was the highest trait in the character of Jesus. He came to do the Father's will, and He became obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross.

XII.

LESSONS FROM THE PALM TREE

"A great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet Him."—JOHN 12:12, 13.

IN a few weeks we will celebrate Palm Sunday, which is the Sunday before Easter, and the Sunday that opens Holy Week, the week of our Saviour's suffering and death.

I spoke to you about His coming to Jerusalem in another sermon and I will not take up that story today; but I want to speak to you at this time about the trees from which the people plucked the branches which they carried and which they spread in the way.

In the days of Jesus the palm tree, or date-palm, was one of the chief trees of Palestine, and even more so in the days of David, who is supposed to have written the ninety-second Psalm, in which he says: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree."

We may learn many lessons from the palm tree, a few of which I want to point out in this sermon.

The palm tree is *beautiful.* The people of the East loved it very much, and its beauty made them glad. The Jews often gave its name to women, and

their poets often compared their beautiful women to it. In the Song of Solomon the writer says about the bride: "This thy stature is like to a palm tree."

The palm tree was often planted in the courts of palaces and churches, and perhaps palm trees were growing in the Temple courts in Solomon's time. The smaller palms are used in our churches on Palm Sunday and at other times when we want our churches to look beautiful.

The palm tree is always beautiful and green. It is called an evergreen. It seems to be always young, no matter how old it may be. Some one has said: "Its lifetime is all youth, its year all spring."

God wants us to be beautiful and young and fresh, like the palm tree. It has been said that beauty is only skin-deep. Another proverb says: "Handsome is that handsome does." Real beauty is not that which is found on the outside, but it is beauty of soul which makes the whole life beautiful.

One day a great tree fell in the forest. The people wondered why this tree fell, and a man went to see. He found out the reason. While the outside of the tree was all right, the bark looking sound and well, the inside of the tree was rotten through and through, and had nothing but a shell on the outside. This trouble was caused by a little worm that bored through the bark of the tree many years before, and he was followed by other worms, and all of them kept eating the fibre of the tree until the heart was gone, and the tree fell.

Sin is like a worm eating its way into the heart and

life of boys and girls, and, if it is not taken away, when they grow to be men and women, they will fall like the tree in the forest. Christ can make us and keep us clean and pure so that we will be beautiful and strong like the palm tree.

The palm tree is *straight* It rises like a tall mast, without a leaf except at the top, where grows a tuft of graceful leaves like a parasol. The palm tree is the straightest of all trees, and in the days of King David it grew to a height of a hundred feet and over.

When the Psalmist says: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree," he means they shall be straight and upright in their life and character. Righteous people are right people,—right with God and with man. They are straight in all their ways and doings. They do not stoop to crooked and wicked things.

It is said that the palm tree, unlike every other tree, grows best if you press it down. The more pressure you put upon the tree the more it bears. So the good people of the world, the righteous people, have grown stronger under trial and affliction. Perhaps this is the reason why the palm branch is the symbol of victory.

The palm tree is *useful.* "Without fruit a tree is little better than a log." But fruit is not the only thing the palm tree is good for. They say that the Arabs have three hundred and sixty names for the palm tree and that they claim to find as many uses for it. The palm trees furnish food, drink, shelter, clothing, fuel, timber, building material, baskets,

mats, fibre, paper, starch, brooms, walking sticks, sugar, oil, wax, ropes, cloth, dyeing materials, resin, and many other products.

God wants us to be useful, as well as beautiful and upright. The Bible says:

"Even a child maketh himself known by his doings,
Whether his work be pure, and whether it be right."

God has something for every boy and girl to do, and if you ask Him, like Samuel did, He will tell you what it is.

Perhaps the Psalmist had the palm tree in mind when he said about the righteous man, in the first Psalm:

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water,
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also doth not wither;
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

XIII.

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—MATT. 16:24.

WE have come to the time of the Christian year when we are led to think of the Cross of Christ, and it may be well for us to try and learn its meaning.

The Cross belongs to the whole Christian Church, because it is the Cross of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Some congregations, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, have placed the Cross at the top of the church steeple, where it stands out sharp and distinct, with the sky for a background.

In many churches the cross is found on the altar, and is also used as an ornament of the church furniture. The Cross has, therefore, become dear to every Christian, and as you children learn to know its meaning better, you will think more highly of it because of what it stands for.

1. *The Cross is the badge of Christian discipleship.* Jesus Himself said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Some Christians wear the Cross as an ornament, at the end of a necklace, or as a watch-charm, or in some other way. There is no harm in doing this,

but this is not what Jesus meant by taking up the cross. These persons are not Christians because they wear the Cross, but they wear the Cross because they are Christians.

The Cross belongs to human life. No matter what anyone wishes to accomplish, it will mean cross-bearing, paying the price. If one would become a scholar, a musician, a successful business-man, a Christian: it means that he must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow his ideal.

If you and I want to be true followers of Jesus, we dare not be afraid of the cross, but must be willing to take it up, and to carry it faithfully to the end. If you drag your cross, it will be very heavy, because you will have to drag it alone. But if you carry your cross, it will be light, because Jesus will help you to carry it.

2. *The Cross is a token of God's love.* "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."

We see the fullness of God's love not at the manger, but at the Cross. When God gave His Son, He not only sent His Son into the world, but also allowed Him to die on the Cross.

Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." He laid down his life for us, and at the Cross we see how much He loves us.

By being willing to take up our cross and bearing it for His sake we can show Him how much we love Him.

Whenever we look at the Cross, or think of the Cross, let us not forget that it is a token of love—God's love, Christ's love, our love.

3. *The Cross is a symbol of suffering.*

It was on the Cross that Jesus suffered—and died. If we read the story of His suffering, and sit down and think how He must have suffered as they nailed Him to the Cross and as He hung there in the hot sun, and at last gave up His life for our sakes, how can we help but love Him and adore Him and worship Him?

But the greatest suffering which Jesus bore on the Cross was not due to the wounds in His hands and His feet and His side. His greatest suffering was caused by the sin of the world which He carried in His heart, and which made Him feel for a short time as though His Father Himself had forsaken Him. But His Father looked on Him again with favor, and He won the victory.

4. *The Cross is the emblem of salvation.*

Because Jesus was willing to die upon the Cross, He became the Saviour of the world. But as the emblem of salvation the cross refers not only to the death, but to the whole life of Jesus.

Jesus said, during His ministry, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

While He was hanging on the Cross, the Jews mocked Him. Some of them wagged their heads and said, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross." In like

manner also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." Although they said this to mock Him, it was a great truth. If Jesus had saved Himself, He would not be our Saviour; but because He did not save Himself, He has become our Saviour and the Saviour of the whole world, and the Cross will always be the emblem of salvation.

St. Paul says: "For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God."

5. *The Cross is the sign of victorious conquest.* The empty Cross, and not the crucifix, is the sign of Christ's victory. The empty cross and the empty tomb show that they could not hold the world's Saviour.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul shouts: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We place the Cross on our "conquest flags," as we march forward to win the world for Christ. Wherever men and women go to preach the Gospel of Christ, they are said to march under the banner of the Cross.

"In Hoc Signo Vinces," was painted on the banners of the Crusaders. It means, "In this sign you shall conquer"—the sign of the Cross.

XIV.

AN EASTER MESSAGE

*"But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? * * * God giveth it a body even as it pleased him."*—I Cor. 15:35, 38.

ON Easter Sunday we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. That is what makes Easter one of the happiest days of the whole Christian year.

Before Jesus died He told His disciples that He would rise again on the third day, and because He arose we also shall arise.

St. Paul says a great deal about the resurrection in the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, from which our text is taken. He is very sure of the risen Christ because he saw Him. He declares: "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep."

The resurrection of Christ was not a return to this life, as was the raising of Lazarus, but it was a resurrection to the life which death can never touch. Our resurrection, also, will be a rising into that blessed life which death will never be able to touch.

St. Paul has a great deal to say about the resurrection body. He says: "But some one will say,

How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?" And then he answers these questions by using pictures from nature. He says: "Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own."

The farmers and gardeners are beginning to get ready to plant their seeds from which they expect to gather a rich harvest during the summer. Every seed that is placed into the ground dies in a sense, but the life-germ that is in it grows and comes up through the ground and becomes beautiful and glorious.

How fitting it is that Easter should come at this time of the year in our climate. We have a real resurrection of nature every spring. In winter the trees and the shrubs, the gardens and the forests, the meadows and the fields seem dead. But in the spring there is a resurrection, an awakening, a new life all around, and soon that which seemed dead will be full of life and beauty. The trees will be covered with leaves, and the shrubs with flowers; the gardens will glow with new beauty, and the forests will wear their garments of glory; the meadows will be spread with a beautiful green carpet, and the fields will be full of life and gladness.

If God takes such care of nature and brings new

life out of death, how much more will He take care of us, who are made in His image, and are to bear His likeness forever!

I believe that the death of our present body will set free a new and more beautiful and perfect body, which will be suited to the world in which we shall live forever. The body we now have is well suited to the world in which we now live, but, as St. Paul says, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." We shall need a different body in the world to which we are going.

When I was a boy I took a great interest in nature, and as I went out into the country I watched the cocoons into which the caterpillars had spun themselves in the fall. Their little cradles were rocked by the winter winds as they hung on the bushes, and when the warm spring sun kissed them the beautiful butterflies came forth. They left the dead shell hanging on the bushes as they sailed away in the summer atmosphere. What a difference there is between the caterpillar, which some people call an ugly worm, and the glorious butterfly which floats in the sunlight, and yet they are the same creature.

I believe the body that we shall have in our new life after the resurrection will be as much more beautiful than the body we now have as the butterfly is more beautiful than the caterpillar. St. Paul has a beautiful way of saying it: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural

body; it is raised a spiritual body. * * * And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

If God can change a caterpillar into a butterfly; if He can change an ugly grub that lives in the water and in the mud into a beautiful dragon-fly that sails in the sunlight; if He can change a hellgramite into a beautiful insect with silken wings; then I believe He can also change me into a heavenly being that shall be like Christ.

The question, "With what manner of body do they come?" is answered, as St. Paul also answers it in Philippians 3:21, "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory."

Surely you and I will be satisfied if our resurrection bodies shall be like that of the risen and glorified Christ!

XV.

MAKING PEARLS

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—MATT. 13:45, 46.

SOME of the best things we have in life come from suffering, and that is the way pearls are made.

Pearls have been known for more than three thousand years, being the first jewels spoken of in the earliest writings we know.

Some of the other gems and precious stones must be cut and polished to look beautiful, but pearls are lovely without this work. That is why pearls have been in use so long, because they are found ready-made, and can be used at once.

Pearls have been called frozen drops of dew, and long ago people thought they were drops of dew made solid, and some even thought that they fell down from Heaven.

Pearls, as you know, are generally found in the shell of the oyster or the mussel, and it is very interesting to know how they get there and how they are made.

It is said that when a grain of sand gets inside the oyster shell it hurts the oyster just as it hurts us when we get a particle of something in our eye.

When that happens tears begin to form and our eyes begin to water so that the dirt may be washed out. The oyster also sheds a tear when sand gets into its shell and touches its delicate body. But the tears which the oyster sheds are not like our tears, made of salt and water, but they are made of lime and water. The lime becomes hard and forms a layer of "mother of pearl," which is beautiful and shiny. As the oyster keeps on covering this spot with lime-water it forms a little knob of pearl fastened to the shell, which is called a blister pearl.

But the most beautiful pearls are those which are perfectly round, and they are made in a different way. They are not caused by a grain of sand getting into a shell, but by a tiny worm which bores its way into the oyster body. The oyster at once gets to work to enclose this little worm with pearl, and at last there is the beautiful round pearl which is so valuable.

It is said that the largest and most perfect pearl known is an inch and a half long and one inch wide, and is worth about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The most beautiful pearl in the world is in the Moscow Museum.

Some years ago I visited the Tower of London, where the royal gems of England are kept. Among them are diamonds and pearls and other precious stones, which are valued at fifteen million dollars.

Many of the finest pearls are secured by divers, who go down to the bottom of the ocean and bring up the shells in which the pearls are found. These

divers have to run many risks, from ocean currents, rocks, sharks, and other troubles.

We learn a very beautiful lesson from the making of pearls. They come from the pain and suffering of the oyster, which makes the lovely pearl as a result of the hurt or injury it receives.

Many of the best things in the world have come to us as the result of suffering.

John Milton, who wrote "Paradise Lost," one of the greatest poems in the English language, had written a few things before he became blind, but the world would not remember him for any of them. When he was forty-four years old he became blind, and then, like the oyster, he began to make pearls. God opened the eyes of his soul so that he could see wonderful things, and he wrote "Paradise Lost," which has placed him among the six greatest poets in the world's history. If he had not become blind he might never have written "Paradise Lost," and the world would not have this great and beautiful pearl which has made him so famous.

The Italian poet, Dante, was driven out of the city of Florence, which he loved very dearly, and because of his sufferings he was driven to write "The Divine Comedy," which placed him also among the world's six greatest poets, the other four being Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare and Goethe, and all of these had their troubles.

How much better it is, when trouble and sorrow come into one's life, to make the best of them, than to brood over them and to murmur and complain.

If we do like the oyster does, we can make something good and beautiful come out of our sufferings.

Jesus Himself, who gave us the parable which is our text, was a "Man of Sorrows," and He made His death on the cross result in the greatest good to the world, so that we are all better because He suffered and died for us.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the pearl of great price which Jesus wants us to buy, even though we must sell everything else we have to get it. This is the pearl He made for us through His great suffering, and if we seek first the Kingdom all other things that are good for us shall be added unto us.

XVI.

HAPPY SPRING-TIME

"For, lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come."—THE SONG OF SOLOMON 2:11, 12.

WINTER seems to be the longest season of the year, and everybody is glad when Spring comes. The seasons are about alike in length, but every one of the other seasons seems to be shorter than Winter, because the latter is stern and cold and rough and dreary.

Spring seems to be the happiest of all the seasons. This may be due to the fact that it follows right after Winter, and because the change is so much greater than that which takes place when the other seasons blend into each other.

In winter the ground is hard and frozen, the trees are bare, the gardens are desolate, there are scarcely any birds, and no flowers are seen out of doors. It almost seems as though all nature were dead.

But nature is not dead. Below the hard and frozen ground there is life in every root and in every seed. They are getting ready to dress the trees with leaves, the gardens and fields with flowers, and to welcome back the birds in the Spring.

Some one has written a beautiful poem which fits

in right here. If I knew the author's name I would mention it and thank him for the poem.

"Where are the snowdrops?" said the sun;
"Dead," said the frost,
"Buried and lost,
Every one!"

"A foolish answer," said the sun;
"They did not die
Asleep they lie,
Every one!"

"And I will wake them, I, the sun,
Into the light
All clad in white,
Every one!"

The sun has a great deal to do, has almost everything to do, with the coming of Spring. In winter the sun is farthest away from us, being below the equator. On the twenty-first of March the sun is just over the equator, and it is the beginning of Spring. At that time day and night are alike. Then the sun begins to come north, and on the twenty-first of June, the beginning of Summer, we have the longest day and the shortest night. After a short rest, the sun begins to turn again and goes southward so that by the twenty-first of September he crosses the equator again, making day and night of equal length. That is the beginning of Autumn. After going southward for three more months, he reaches the most southern point on the twenty-first of December, giving us the beginning of Winter, and the shortest day and the longest night.

Now the Winter is past; the sun has crossed the equator; happy Springtime is here; and the two

other happy seasons are before us—the Summer with its harvests, and the Autumn with its fruits.

I think we ought to be glad to live in this part of the world, where Springtime and Easter-tide walk together. The coming of Spring is a parable of the resurrection. That which seemed dead during the Winter has put on new life.

"The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come."

There was once a great man who thought it so good for everybody to see and love God's beautiful gift of flowers that he used to say, "If you have money enough to buy two loaves, buy one loaf and a bunch of flowers."

Here is something beautiful I read about violets. I am sure you will like it:

"Violets again—little wet violets, and there is the clean, sweet breath of spring. One could lift his head and drink deep—taste the newness, this grateful freshness that is about. There is a quicker leap of life, and Nature seems to stir with a kind of tenderness. There is a deeper glow on the faces of children—easier happiness on a tiny nestling face. Girlhood comes to outward whiteness again—the cool, crisp sign of spring. And in all is the subtle charm of violets—little human, tremulous things, gentle as love's whisper, pure as purity. Restful, quaint little flower, too-simple, appealing. Flower to lay on a baby that has died—to give as seemly tribute to womanhood—to press against the face as

ease-ment for tired heart. Such a dear, peaceful little flower, all alone in flower-land, emblem of the world's simplest and best, and waiting to mock a false face, or adorn the beauty that comes from the soul."

The awakening of nature in the Spring is a real resurrection. Out of what seemed to be dead comes real and beautiful life. Why should we have any doubts or fears about our resurrection? The same God who calls the flowers out of the earth and brings the birds back to us, will also call us into the land of eternal spring where we shall shine as the stars forever and ever.

XVII.

THE LITTLE FOXES

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards; for our vineyards are in blossom."—SONG OF SOLOMON 2:15.

THE plants and flowers of spring have many enemies, and some of them are spoiled or killed before they can grow up. All kinds of insects and worms get after the plants and flowers, and they are not as nice and beautiful as they would be without these enemies. Some insects, however, are the friends of the plants and flowers and scatter their pollen and their seeds so that they are more beautiful and more fruitful.

But our text speaks of those animals which injure and destroy the plants, especially the vines in the vineyards when they are in blossom in the spring. The writer talks about the little foxes that spoil the vineyards.

You know foxes are very sly animals, so that people sometimes say of a man, "He is as sly as a fox." Foxes live in burrows in the ground, and their burrows have many openings, so that they can get in and out in all sorts of sly ways. When dogs are chasing the foxes and watch at one hole to catch them, they get out at another hole and run away.

Foxes sometimes spoil the grape vines when they

burrow in the ground and kill the roots. They also trample on the tender vines and bruise them and spoil the flowers. When the grapes are ripe foxes sometimes eat the grapes and suck the juice and spoil many of the clusters of grapes. You have heard of the fable of the fox and the grapes.

The writer of the text speaks of "the little foxes." Even little foxes can do a great deal of harm, and can spoil the vineyards when they are in blossom.

Children are like tender vines that are blooming, and there are many little foxes that try to spoil them. Sin is like a sly fox that tries to spoil the tender vine, and it is the little sins that children must watch out for. Someone has said, "The little sins get in at the windows and open the doors for the big house-breakers."

Many children form bad habits which seem only little things at first, but they often spoil the whole life. There are many stories told of the little things which, if allowed to go on, will become big and will do a great deal of harm.

A young soldier was shooting for a prize. When his turn came to shoot he took his place and pointed his rifle at the target. His hand was steady and his eye was clear, but when he fired he missed the mark. What was the matter? There was a bit of rust in his gun-barrel. He had not kept the inside of his gun-barrel clean. It was only a little fox, but it spoiled the vine.

Holland is a very flat country. It is lower than the level of the sea, which is kept out by large banks of earth called dykes. It is a terrible thing for a

leak to come in the dyke. At first it may be only a little crack, but if it is not closed at once it becomes larger and larger, and soon the waters rush in and flood the country.

One evening a little boy was walking along the dykes and he saw a little hole in one of them. He knew what that meant, and instead of running home, as some little boys would have done, he put his hand against the little hole to keep the water from coming through. He thought someone might soon come and take his place. But no one came, and the night came on, and it was very cold and dark. And there the little boy stood all night with his little hand against the hole to keep the water from coming in.

Early the next morning the minister came along and he found the little boy at his post, almost frozen and very tired, but he saved the country from great damage and harm.

Now there are many little foxes which try to spoil the boys and the girls, but I do not have room to tell you all about them. I can only mention some of them. Perhaps in another sermon I can tell you more about them. These are the little foxes that you must watch and guard against that they do not spoil your vine and ruin your life: a little lie, a little theft, a little fit of temper, a little act of disobedience, a little oath or bad word, a little act of selfishness, a little jealousy, a little laziness; and there are a great many other little foxes that spoil the vines. If we do not get rid of the little foxes they will grow big and will do a great deal of harm.

XVIII.

A FAIRYLAND OF LIGHT

"I am the light of the world." "Ye are the light of the world."—JOHN 8:12 AND MATT. 5:14.

A SHORT time ago I took a ferry boat to cross from Jersey City to New York City late in the evening. It seemed more like a fairy boat than a ferry boat because of the wonderful sight I saw as I stood on the front deck. If you have never come to New York in this way after dark you do not know what a wonderful sight it is; and if you have seen it in this way, you will never forget the sight.

New York is indeed a fairyland of light. As far as the eye can see, across the river, up the river, down the river, there are thousands and thousands of lights. Even in a single one of the great skyscrapers there are thousands of lights.

And there are many electric signs with changing letters and words, spelling out and telling out what they are to make known to the world.

More than ten years ago, after a trip to Europe, our steamer arrived south of Long Island when it was dark and we saw the lights of Coney Island and the other places along the coast, and this southern view of the lights of Greater New York and its surroundings made it appear like a fairyland of light.

New York City is wonderful in the day-time, but much more wonderful at night. If one could look down upon it from the Woolworth Building at night, as I have looked down upon it in the day-time, the sight must indeed be glorious. This building is sixty stories high, seven hundred and ninety-two feet and one inch, and is the tallest and most beautiful office building in the world.

I have seen pictures which show how New York City would look at night from the top of this building, and they make one wish he could see the sight.

In going on one of the New England steamboats, through the East River and under the Brooklyn Bridge and the other great bridges, one sees the city from the other side, in fact he sees Brooklyn and New York from the middle, and again this great city looks like a fairyland of light.

But most wonderful of all is the sight that greets you in the very heart of the city, as you enter upon the Great White Way and go up or down those twenty or more blocks and see the greatest electrical display in the world. You cannot help but feel that you are in a fairyland of light.

I left the city in the afternoon on my way home, again on a ferry boat, and I thought the magic of the city was gone. But again my boat was changed into a fairy boat. It was about five o'clock, and the sun was just far enough down in the west to shine into the thousands of windows in the buildings of New York, and this also had a wonderful effect, because the windows flashed like diamonds

as they reflected the light of the sun, so that the city was once more a fairyland of light.

And it is the sun, we are told, that is back of all the light we have by day and by night. The fuel that is used in making the electricity, without which most of these wonders would not be possible, is stored-up sunshine that has been hidden away for millions of years.

But now comes the most wonderful thing of all. Jesus does not call the sun the light of the world, but He says, "I am the light of the world." "Ye are the light of the world." Greater and more wonderful than the millions of lights in the windows of New York, greater than the wonders of the Great White Way, all of which are a reflection of the light of the sun; greater than all of these are the men and the women and the children of New York who reflect the light of Christ, who is the light of the world.

It is not the buildings of New York, or the parks, or the subways, or the lights of the Great White Way, that make the city great, but the people who are in it. None of these things make the city good, none of them make it bad, but the city is made good or bad by the people who are in it.

Christ is the light of the world, and the good people are those who reflect this light, and they become the light of the world. As the windows reflect the light of the sun, so must you and I reflect the light of Christ in our lives.

When a room is dark you might bring in a bucket and shovel and work all night trying to

shovel out the darkness and to make the room light, but when the first rays of the rising sun come in through the windows the darkness is gone at once.

Men may try many ways of getting rid of the darkness of sin and evil in the world, but when Christ shines into the hearts of the people the darkness disappears.

There are some persons who say that New York, which I have called a fairyland of light, is a very wicked city. I do not know whether it is any more wicked than other cities in proportion to their size, but I do know that the only hope for New York, or any other city or town or village, to become what it ought to be, is to have Christ as its light. As He enters into the hearts of the men and women and children of any place they will become the light of the world, and will make the whole world a fairyland of light.

It is said that a beautiful palace of ice was once built for a Russian prince. In the daytime it looked very grand and stately, but it was so cold and cheerless that no one cared to enter it. When night came on, a boy with a lighted candle went through the door, and at once the whole place was filled with warmth and gladness. The palace seemed to have caught the sheen of the pearly gates of heaven.

"Ye are the light of the world * * * Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

XIX.

LOVE AND FEAR

"There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear."—I JOHN 4:18.

MANY years ago I heard a minister lecture on "Two Snakes in Eden." The two snakes about which he spoke were fear and worry. He tried to show that these two snakes take away much of the peace and happiness of life, and keep it from being the paradise which God wants it to be.

The Bible has a great deal to say about fear. The word is found about five hundred times in the Bible. The words, "Fear not" are used quite often. The Bible also has a great deal to say about love, the word "love" being used about as often as the word "fear."

There are some persons who like to make children afraid. They scare them by making them believe all kinds of things that are not true. Even parents sometimes try to use fear to make their children obey. Many children are afraid of the dark because they are made to believe that all kinds of ugly and bad things are found in the dark. I believe it is very wrong to create this kind of fear in a child's mind.

Sometimes the fears of childhood cling to a person in after life. We read about a girl who was

very much frightened when she took her first ride in a railroad train. Every now and then she hid her head in her mother's arms and cried, "Oh, mother! I'm afraid; it's so ugly under the arches." Even when she was a middle-aged woman she had a horror for those same ugly places under the arches whenever she rode in a train. Perhaps her mother could have taken away that fear if she had made a few explanations to her when she was a child.

Our Saviour had a great deal of trouble with His disciples about fear. One time He was in a boat with them crossing the Sea of Galilee, when a great storm came up and the waves dashed over the boat, but Jesus was asleep. They came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Save, Lord; we perish." He said to them, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. If the disciples had had greater love for Jesus they would have trusted Him more and would not have been so much afraid.

It is said that one time Julius Caesar, the great Roman soldier, was in a ship that was overtaken by a storm at sea. The captain of the ship was very much afraid and full of terror. The conqueror said to him, "Why do you fear for the ship? Do you not know that it carries Caesar?"

An English officer was once drafted to go abroad with his regiment. He took his wife and children with him on the voyage. They had not been many days at sea when a terrible storm arose, and many on board were afraid that it would destroy the ship

and they should all lose their lives. The officer's wife was also very much afraid, but she noticed that her husband was calm and composed in the midst of it all. She scolded him and said that he did not love her and the children as he should, for if he was not concerned for his own safety, he ought to be for theirs. He did not say anything, but at once left the cabin, and came back in a short time with his drawn sword in his hand. With a stern look he went over to his wife and pressed the point of the sword against her breast. She did not seem a bit scared, but only smiled at him. "What!" said he, "are you not afraid when a drawn sword is at your breast?" "No," she answered, "not when I know that it is in the hand of one who loves me." "And would you have me," replied he, "to be afraid of this storm and tempest, when I know it is in the hand of my Heavenly Father, who loves me?" That officer had the kind of love for God which casts out fear.

When a bird is first caught it is afraid of everything and everybody, and it will not sing until that fear is gone.

When children first go to school they are afraid of everything, and they will not learn anything until that fear is gone.

As long as men were afraid of nature they did not make much progress in knowledge and power, but since they have learned to love and study and use nature they have made wonderful progress.

We are told that if we fear God we shall have nothing else to fear. This fear of God does not

mean dread or terror, but the kind of respect and reverence for God which grow out of true love.

Perfect love for God also takes away the fear of death. St. Paul says, "The last enemy that shall be abolished is death." There is no death for the Christian. What we call death is Christ coming to take us home, and if we love Him we will not be afraid of Him.

XX.

LITTLE MOTHERS

"As is the mother, so is her daughter."—EZEK. 16:44.

ANOTHER Mothers' Day is past, and I hope every one of you did something to honor your mother and to make her happy, or, if she is gone, to honor her memory.

But today I want to tell you about little mothers, of whom we find one now and then, and without whom the world would be much poorer.

A little mother is a sister who takes the place of the mother in the home, either because the mother has died or is too sickly and feeble to care for her children. This daughter becomes the little mother to the other children of the family.

Our text says, "As is the mother, so is her daughter." This is an old proverb, and in the chapter from which the text is taken it is used in a bad sense. But it may also be used in a good sense, and that is the way in which I want you to think of it.

A little mother is a good daughter and a good sister. She has learned the things which make her a little mother from her own mother, and she tries to deal with the smaller children whose little mother she is as their own mother would deal with them if she could.

In the Book of Exodus we read the story of

Moses, who was born at a time when the ruler of Egypt said about the Israelite children: "Every son that is born, ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive."

When Moses was born, his mother saw that he was a goodly child and hid him three months. And when she could no longer hide him, she made an ark of bulrushes and put the baby Moses into it and laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

Then his sister Miriam became a little mother to him. She stood afar off and watched to see what would become of her little brother. The daughter of the king came down to the river to bathe, and she saw the ark among the flags and sent one of her maidens to fetch it. She opened the basket and saw the pretty baby who was crying, and she pitied him and said: "This is one of the Hebrews' children." Then the little mother, who had been watching, came running up to the princess and said: "Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" So she ran and called her mother, and Moses was given into her care, and she brought him up until he was old enough to go to the king's palace as the son of the princess.

I am sure Miriam, who helped to save the life of her baby brother, loved him very dearly, and often was a little mother to him and helped her mother to bring him up.

I know a family in which the mother was sickly, and, after lingering awhile in her weakness, God took her to Himself. She left a family of seven

children, and the oldest daughter, who was a mere girl, became the little mother of the family. She did her work in a wonderful way, doing the housework and caring for the six other children. A few years ago she married and started a home of her own, and the duties of the little mother were taken up by the next sister who now has charge of the family. The father has to be away from home a great deal, and these two daughters have been the little mothers of the family and have done their part very well.

One day a rich woman, looking from the window of her home in New York City, saw little girls carrying babies in their arms, all too heavy for such children. She found out that these little girls were taking care of their baby brothers and sisters while their mothers were away all day earning a living for the family.

This rich woman felt that something ought to be done for these little mothers so that they should not become old too soon. She began by taking small parties of them into the country for outings. In this way began "The Little Mothers' Aid," an association which has been carrying on this work for about twenty-five years, and now has four houses in the city, and a summer house in the country, where joy is brought to the hearts of hundreds of these little mothers.

We read about a little mother in a family of nine children, five boys and four girls. Her older sister married and the care of the family fell upon her. She raised all the rest of the children, and lived to

see them marry, one after another, until they were all gone and she was left alone. They all loved her, and named their babies after her. She earned her living by teaching and by giving readings and lectures.

At last the end came. Her work as a little mother was done, and she fell asleep. The brothers and sisters laid her remains by the side of the father and mother, and as they went home they realized for the first time all that she had done for them, and what a good little mother she had been.

XXI.

ANTS AS TEACHERS

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise."—PROV. 6:6.

NOW the bright and beautiful summer days are coming, and it seems a little hard to sit in the school room. But vacation is not far off, and then the school room will be left behind for awhile.

But, do you know, boys and girls, that our days of learning will never be done so long as we are in this world. Our whole life is a school, and we have many teachers. We learn not only from men and women, but also from boys and girls, from animals, birds and insects.

Today I want to tell you about one of the smallest teachers you can ever have, and yet it is one from whom you can learn many things. This teacher is the ant, and I hope, if you have any chance this summer, you will try to learn something from the ants and to learn more about ants.

Ants are mentioned only twice in the Bible, and both times in the Book of Proverbs, 6:6 and 30:25. Our text is taken from those beautiful verses in Proverbs 6:6-8, which read: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no chief, overseer, or ruler, provideth her

bread in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest."

The other verse about the ants says: "The ants are a people not strong, yet they provide their food in the summer."

While our text is addressed to the lazy man—the sluggard—it has a lesson for each one of us, whether lazy or not.

Many men have gone to school to the ants, and have learned a great deal from them. Whole books have been written about the ants, and from these we can learn many things which it would take us years to learn for ourselves. These men have studied ants in their nests, while at work, and tell us a great deal about their habits and doings. Sometimes they brought whole ant colonies into their homes, where they studied them under the microscope and tried many experiments to learn more about them.

There are only a few things about ants for which I have room in this sermon, but I tell you these in the hope that you will be so much interested that you will try to find out some more things for yourselves, and that you will get books from your libraries and read all you can about these interesting little creatures.

There are many kinds of ants. Some are black, some white, some red, some yellow. Some ants are very small, less than a sixteenth of an inch in length; others are more than an inch long; and many sizes between these two.

The ants live in cities and towns, and villages and

colonies, under the ground. The men who study ants carry them and their houses into a dark room, and look at them by red light, to which the ants are blind. They do most of their work under ground in the dark, and so when they are studied by red light they think they are in total darkness and keep right on with their work.

They have queens, or mothers, who lay all the eggs; and they have drones, gentlemen, workmen, soldiers, babies, and slaves. How interesting it would be to tell you about all these different classes of ants.

I believe that all of you would like to know more about the baby ants. When the eggs are hatched they are not ants, but grubs, or larvae. They are little white babies, without any legs, that have to be carried about by the nurses. Sometimes they are carried out into the sun, and then carried back into the nest at night. These nurses also feed the babies on honey and other food which they gather. When these babies are large enough they wrap themselves in tiny cocoons, as the caterpillars do, and go to sleep. They sleep for many days, and when they wake up they are changed into ants. They cannot get out of these cocoon cradles without help, so the nurses have to help them out and to straighten out their little legs, so they can walk.

When you lift a stone near an ants' nest, you may find under it all four forms of the life of the ants—eggs, grubs, cocoons and ants. As soon as you lift the stone the ants will run and carry off the eggs, the larvae, and the cocoons to a place of safety.

The ants also have cows, who give them their milk. These cows are little plant lice, or aphids, of whose honey-dew they are very fond. An ant will walk up to an aphid and stroke its back with its feelers, or antennae, and at once the pleased little insect gives forth a drop of sweet fluid, which the ant gladly drinks up or carries away for the babies. The ants take very good care of their cows, and carry them to new pastures when the old ones dry up. They also carry the aphid-eggs into their nests and keep them during the winter, and then carry the young plant lice out and put them on plants in the spring. If these aphids are their cows, then the young ones must be their calves.

Another wonderful thing about ants is that they smell with their feelers, hear with their legs, and see with their eyes some colors which we are not able to see. As I said before, they are blind to red, but they make up for this by seeing some colors that we have no names for.

It has been found out by long study that the feelers, or antennae, are the ant's nose. It feels with them, and it also smells. These feelers have ten joints, and each of these joints helps the ant to smell or find out a special thing.

Is it any wonder that the Bible wants us to go to the ant to learn some good lessons?

XXII.

JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

"But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. 19:14.

I DO not know any better subject for a Children's Day sermon than "Jesus and the Children." And the most beautiful text for this kind of a sermon is the one I have selected for today.

There are five things which Jesus did for the little children of His day, as shown in the short story given by Matthew, Mark and Luke, and He does as much, and more, for the children of our day.

He stood up for them when the disciples wanted to keep them from Him. Mark says, "And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God."

Jesus does not want the little children to be kept away from Him. He is the Friend of little children. The Reformed Church has always believed in bringing the children to Jesus as early as possible. For this reason we dedicate them to Him in holy baptism in their infancy. We want our chil-

dren to be in the fold. We want them to be baptized members of the Church.

Once there was a boy who had been taught the lesson of "the ninety and nine," and he told his father that he wanted to be in the fold, he wanted to become a Christian. "Oh, you are too young," was his father's only answer. Toward evening a storm came up, and the father sent the boy out to put the sheep into the fold. "Did you get them all in safely?" the father asked when he came back. "I put all the old sheep in," answered the boy. "You don't mean that you left the lambs out, do you?" asked the father anxiously. "Why, of course, father," said the boy; "I thought they were too young." "You are right," then said the father to the boy. "You can only be safe from the storms of temptation by being in the fold of the Good Shepherd, and you cannot enter too young."

Next, Jesus took the little children in His arms. This shows how much He loved the children, and it also shows how much they loved Him. Jesus was the first great teacher who loved children for their own sake, and it is only in Christian lands and where His Gospel is preached and practiced that children are cared for as they ought to be.

A little girl who was very sick had the story of Jesus blessing the children read to her by her sister. The words of our text, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven," seemed to impress her very much, and when her sister closed the Bible, the sick girl said to her, "How kind! I shall

soon go to Jesus. He will take me up in His arms, and bless me, too!"

The beautiful promise in Isaiah says, "He will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom."

Jesus also laid His hands upon the children who were brought to Him. The laying on of hands was practiced by parents upon their children long before Jesus came into the world. So Joseph brought his sons to Jacob, that he might lay his hands upon them and bless them. His blessing would be sure to make rich in one way or another.

But what a blessing it was to have the hands of Jesus placed upon the heads of the children! How interesting it would be if we could know what became of those children.

We still like to sing the beautiful hymn, written by Jemima Luke, eighty-three years ago:

"I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children as lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with them then.

"I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,
That His arm had been thrown around me,
And that I might have seen His kind look when He said,
'Let the little ones come unto Me.'"

But it is more wonderful to live now and to be able to sing:

"Yet still to His footstool in prayer I may go,
And ask for a share in His love;
And if I thus earnestly seek Him below,
I shall see Him and hear Him above."

Then Jesus blessed the children, which was a priestly act, and they were blest indeed! Too few

parents bring their children to Jesus to be blest of Him. In Belgium, boys will run up to the priests and other religious men and ask them to sign them with the sign of the cross. Sir Thomas More, a great Englishman, publicly asked his aged father to give him his blessing. But best of all it is to teach our children to go to Jesus to receive the greatest blessings of life.

And Jesus used the children as an example and as the text for a sermon: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." There are many traits of children which men and women must cultivate if they want to get to heaven. Childish things we must put away, as St. Paul says, and must outgrow; but childlike qualities of faith, hope, love, trust, innocence, purity, sympathy, truthfulness and sincerity we must keep and strengthen that they may grow beautiful with age.

XXIII.

THE STORY OF OUR FLAG

"In the name of our God we will set up our banner."—PSALM 20:5.

ON June the fourteenth we will celebrate the one hundred and forty-seventh anniversary of the birth of our flag, and it is fitting that we should say a few words about its history and meaning.

The flag of a nation stands for the nation itself—for its history, its government, its principles, its people; and whoever dishonors the flag dishonors all of these.

If ever a country set up its banner in the name of God, it was our country. From the very beginning, the men who founded our nation were men who honored God, and God honored them. And in our wonderful history of almost a hundred and fifty years our flag has never been made to stoop to any other flag. And today there is no flag more highly honored in all the world than the Stars and Stripes.

It was on Saturday, the fourteenth day of June, 1777, that the Continental Congress adopted a resolution that "the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white, in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

It is said that after this resolution was passed a committee, consisting of George Washington, Robert Morris, and George Ross, called upon Mrs. Betsy Ross, at 239 Arch Street, in Philadelphia, and asked her to make the flag. Betsy Ross was the daughter of Samuel Griscom, who helped in the erection of Independence Hall, and was the widow of John Ross, who died in 1776, after they had been married only three years.

It is said that at first the stars on the flag were to be six-pointed, like the British stars, but that Betsy Ross suggested that five-pointed stars be used, which was adopted by the committee.

Mrs. Ross made all the government flags as long as she lived, and her daughter, Mrs. Clarissa Wilson, continued the business until 1857. The home of Mrs. Ross on Arch Street is called "The American Flag Home," and is in charge of the Betsy Ross Memorial Association, which was formed in 1898.

The first flag that was made had seven red stripes, six white stripes, and thirteen white stars arranged in a circle in a field of blue. This flag was in use for eighteen years, and in 1795, the number of stripes was increased to fifteen, eight red and seven white, and the number of stars was also increased to fifteen, arranged not in a circle, but a square of four rows, with four stars in three of the rows and three stars in the fourth row. It was intended to add a star and stripe for every new State admitted into the Union.

This flag remained unchanged for twenty-three years, when Congress, after a long debate, adopted the flag which we now have, the bill being signed by President James Monroe on April 4, 1818, and becoming a law from that date.

The new flag had thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, representing the thirteen original States, and one star for every State in the Union. In 1818, there were twenty stars, and now there are forty-eight. In this way the memory of the beginning of our country is preserved and room is also given to show the progress which our country has made. This surely is the best arrangement that could have been adopted.

Henry Ward Beecher once said of our flag these beautiful words: "Not another flag on the globe has such an errand, or went forth upon the sea, carrying everywhere, the world around, such hope for the captive and such glorious tidings. The stars upon it were to the pining nations like the morning stars of God, and the stripes upon it were beams of morning light."

The colors of our flag have a meaning. The red stands for love, the white for purity, and the blue for fidelity. Every time you look at the flag the red stripes say to you: "Be brave; love your God and your country." The white stripes and white stars say to you: "Be pure and clean in life and in character." The blue field, in which the stars shine, says to you: "Be true and honest." With such qualities in the hearts and lives of our boys and

girls, and our men and women, our country will be safe.

Many stories and poems have been written about our flag. I have two books lying on my desk which are full of them, and I wish I had room to tell some of the stories. I must be satisfied to close with a verse from Henry van Dyke's poem called, "Who Follow the Flag":

"O bright flag, O brave flag, O flag to lead the free!
The hand of God thy colors blent,
And heaven to earth thy glory lent,
To shield the weak, and guide the strong,
To make an end of human wrong,
And draw a countless human host to follow after thee."

XXIV.

WHY I LOVE CHILDREN

"To love their children"—TITUS 2:4

DURING MY twenty-seven years in the Christian ministry, among the many things for which I am thankful to God is the fact that I have been able to work with and for the children.

I enjoy working among men and women and young people, but I also enjoy my work among the children. I have always been able to draw children to myself. I began to teach children when I was a young man, and for more than thirty-five years I have labored among children in the Sunday school, the public school, and the Church. I started my Junior Congregation work almost twelve years ago, and it has been one of the greatest pleasures of my ministry.

In the chapter from which our text is taken, St. Paul tells Titus what to preach to the different classes of people. He tells him to speak to the aged women so that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, and a number of other things that they are to do.

Does it not seem strange to have to tell mothers to love their children? Would it not seem strange to have to tell a minister to love children? Any man who does not love children ought not to be a

minister. In this sermon I want to give you a few reasons why I love children.

I love them because Christ loves them. He was always fond of children. He took them in His arms and blessed them. His Spirit in the hearts of men and women has brought many blessings to the children of the world. Every one with a Christlike spirit will love the children and will try to help them.

There are even some mothers in the world who do not love their children as they should, and no doubt St. Paul thought there might be some such in Crete, where he had left Titus to preach and to finish the work that was left undone.

A family of six, a working man, his wife, and four children, all poor and miserable through drink, lived in a London slum. The drunken wife one evening, wandering about in her misery, saw a sparrow pick up a crumb and carry it to her young in her nest. The poor woman turned pale, trembled for a moment, and burst into tears. The day of change had come to her. "Oh!" she cried, "that sparrow feeds her young birds, and I neglect my young children. And what for? Drink. Nothing but drink!" She wrung her hands and wept and then went home to pray. God heard her prayer and sent His message of forgiveness to her soul. A new light shone in her face, and her husband and children wondered at the great change that had taken place. She never drank again, but gave her love and her time to her family. Her husband also soon became a Christian, and a happy home, with comfort, peace, and plenty soon followed. That is

the kind of love Christ wants to put into every one's heart.

A little boy, after reading "Pilgrim's Progress," asked his mother which of the characters she liked best. She replied, "Christian, of course; he is the hero of the story." But the little fellow said: "Mother, I like Christiana best, because when Christian set out on his pilgrimage, he went alone; but, when Christiana started, she took the children with her."

I love children because of what they are. The best and sweetest gift that God ever gave to man was a little Child, who was born in Bethlehem of Judaea more than nineteen hundred years ago. Every child that is born into the world comes fresh and pure from the hands of God, and if properly received and cherished and loved will be a great blessing in the home.

There is something about children that makes us love them. They are so innocent, trustful, cheerful and hopeful, that we cannot help but love them. And this made Jesus say: "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." Grown-up persons must have the childlike spirit to be pleasing to Christ and to enter His kingdom.

I love children because of what they may become. President Garfield once said that whenever he met a little child he felt like lifting his hat because no one knew what possibilities were buttoned up in that little body.

The important work of the world forty and fifty

years from now will be in the hands of the boys and girls of today, and if we love them and make them the kind of children they ought to be, the future will be safe in their hands.

There are many other reasons why I love children, but I have room to mention only one more. I love them because they help to keep me young. To live with children, to work for children, to love children, and to help children, gives one a childlike spirit and helps to keep one young. Our bodies will grow old with the years, but our spirits need never grow old if we do the things that help to keep them young. A Spaniard once came to this country to find the Fountain of Perpetual Youth. He had been told that if he would bathe in that fountain he would be forever young. He tried different fountains, but his youth did not come back. Those who live with and work for and love children are not far from the Fountain of Perpetual Youth. That is why I love children.

XXV.

OUR NATION'S BIRTHDAY

"Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah."—PSALM 33:12.

ON July the Fourth, we will celebrate the one hundred and forty-eighth birthday of our nation. In two years we expect to have a great celebration of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of our existence as a nation, and preparations are now in progress to celebrate the occasion in a most fitting way. I hope all of the Juniors who read this sermon will be able to take some part in this celebration.

When we think of the small beginning our country had, and how it has grown and prospered during the years of our history, we cannot but believe that God has been with us in a wonderful way, and that our nation has been truly blessed.

That which took place on the Fourth of July, 1776, was the result of a process which had been going on for some time. It was on that day that the Declaration of Independence was signed in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, and this fact gives our nation's birthday the name of Independence Day. But the resolution of independence itself was passed on the second of July.

Mr. John Adams, one of the early patriots, said about the Fourth of July: "It ought to be com-

memorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be celebrated with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore."

This seemed to be a wonderful prophecy, and for more than a hundred years our nation's birthday was celebrated in this way.

Little, however, did Mr. Adams know or think what "guns" and "bonfires" would lead to. If all the deaths and injuries that have resulted from this form of celebration were known, they would represent a large part of those lost and injured during the Revolution.

A different spirit has developed among the American people in recent years. Instead of meaningless noise and the discharge of dangerous fireworks, there is coming into favor a more worthy observance of the day, and I hope there will be a more general return to the first part of Mr. Adams' prophecy, namely, "solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty."

The baser elements of our nature have kept up the dangerous and deadly practices of the past. The greed for gain and the willingness to profit at the expense of injury to innocent children have too long continued the manufacture and sale of dangerous fireworks. This practice has also kept alive the military spirit, from which we must get away if we ever want to have worldwide peace.

It is unfortunate that our public schools are not

in session at the time of the celebration of our nation's birthday. Many of the holidays and festival days are observed in our public schools, and the children are taught many valuable lessons which will be helpful to them in after life. Our national holiday should be used for impressing upon the minds of the young the history of their national liberty, and its cause.

Our Sunday schools and Churches must do this work, as far as they possibly can, so that lessons of real patriotism may be taught, and that the true meaning of the day may be impressed upon young and old.

The cry: "A Safe and Sane Fourth" has been heard for a number of years and is growing more popular all over the country. One of the first cities to celebrate our nation's birthday in a safe and sane manner was the city of Washington, our National Capitol. In 1908, the number of persons treated at the hospitals of the city for injuries received on the Fourth of July were one hundred and four. In 1909, when the first safe and sane Fourth of July was observed in Washington, there was not a single accident of this kind. In the same year in about a dozen cities of our country, where the day was celebrated in the old way, there were twenty-seven deaths, one thousand four hundred and thirty-three persons injured, two hundred and thirty-six fires, and other troubles, all due to the use of fire-arms and fireworks.

Instead of taking life on our nation's birthday, we ought to save lives, if we can. Admiral Sampson

told a story of something that took place on Sunday, July 4, 1898, after the battle with the Spanish squadron, which illustrates what I mean:

As the Admiral's ship sailed into the harbor there were signs of wreckage, death and disaster all around. Among the dead things and burning things that were floating on the water they saw a man swimming, a Spanish sailor. He was making a struggle for his life, but there was nothing near enough for him to cling to, the shore was a long way off, and it was noticed that each stroke he made was fainter than the last. Without help he would be lost. As some of the men were watching him to see how long he would hold out, an American sailor picked up the little pulpit on the deck, with the cross carved to the top of it, and pitched it over the side of the ship into the sea, as he cried: "Here, friend, cling to that. Cling to the cross, and it'll take you safe to shore!" The Spaniard could not understand the words, but he understood the act, and the last they saw of him he was clinging to the pulpit with its cross, moving toward the shore.

Let us do all we can, boys and girls, to make the future celebration of our nation's birthday safe and sane.

XXVI.

CHRIST'S LETTER

"Ye are an epistle of Christ."—II Cor. 3:3.

AS far as we know, Jesus did not write any letters. In the eighth chapter of St. John we read: "But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground." What He wrote there is not known. Some think He wrote a verse of Scripture, while others think He made only marks in the sand.

But St. Paul says to every one of us, "Ye are an epistle of Christ," which means "You are Christ's letter." Every Christian man and woman, every Christian boy and girl is a letter of Christ, "written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh."

We are living epistles, known and read of all men. Christ did not write any books, but every Christian ought to be a living Bible. Letter-writing is a wonderful thing. It has become so common among us that we do not stop to think how wonderful it is. A little over three hundred years ago there was no postoffice in England, because there were only a few people who could write. But in our day, you can see wagon-loads of letters going out of the postoffice in any one of our large cities.

In our country almost every boy and girl of school

age can read and write. But in some of the countries where the missionaries go to teach and preach there are many persons who cannot read or write.

When the missionary John Williams went to the South Sea Islands, those to whom he went knew nothing about writing. The people learned to love him and to love God, and thousands of them brought their idols and laid them at his feet. So many persons came to hear him preach that their chapel was too small to hold them. They started to build a new Church, and when it was finished there was room in it for three thousand people.

While they were building this Church, Mr. Williams needed one of the tools which he had left at his home; and picking up a chip he wrote a note on it to Mrs. Williams, asking her to send the tool back with the man who brought the message.

At first the black man did not want to go, saying that Mrs. Williams would scold him if he carried a chip to her. But Mr. Williams said, "This chip will say all that I wish, and she will understand."

When Mrs. Williams gave him the tool, he asked, "How do you know this is what Mr. Williams wants?" She said, "Did you not give me a chip just now?" "Yes," he answered, "but I did not hear it say anything." "Well," she said, "if you did not, I did."

The poor fellow went away with the tool, and holding the chip high above his head, and running as fast as he could through the village, he shouted as he ran, "See the wisdom of these English people.

They can make chips talk! They can make chips talk!"

It is just as wonderful to have Christ write the secrets of His heart on your hearts and mine. We are His letters, known and read by all men.

Many years ago the city of Paris was surrounded by the German army so that the people in the city could not get out, and no one could come in to see them. The people in the city suffered a great deal for want of food, but they also suffered for want of news of their friends and loved ones in other parts of the world. At last these friends wrote letters which were printed on the first page of a London newspaper, and a photographer made a copy of that page so small that it was only the size of a postage stamp. Then those tiny pages were tied under the wings of doves and carried by them over the heads of the German army into Paris. There the photographers made those tiny pages large again, and in this way the people in Paris got letters from the dear ones far away.

Christ knows the hearts of children are too small to receive His words, so He makes His letter small, so small that it can all be printed on a child's heart. And as the boys and girls grow up their hearts grow larger and larger, and the letters grow with them, so that when they are men and women they find that the loving Jesus has written nearly all the Bible on their hearts.

In writing His letter on the hearts of the people, Christ uses pen, ink, and paper. But the pen He uses is the minister of the Gospel; the ink is the

Holy Spirit, for St. Paul says: "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God;" and the paper is the heart,—"Not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh."

Wherever you and I go, men know us and read us as Christ's letters. It is very important, therefore, that we should be the right kind of boys and girls, and the right kind of men and women.

A beautiful story comes to us from India. There was a Christian missionary there who found that he could not learn the language of the people among whom he labored. After some years he asked the Board to let him give up the work because he could not learn the language. But a dozen missionaries wrote to the Board asking them not to grant his request, saying that his goodness gave him a wider influence among the heathen than any other missionary at the station. When a convert was asked, "What is it to be a Christian?" he replied, "It is to be like that man," naming this good missionary. The Board kept him in India, because he was Christ's letter to the people of India, known and read of all men. That is the kind of Christ's letters you and I want to be!

XXVII.

THE CALL OF THE MOUNTAINS

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains."—PSALM 121:1.

VACATION time is here again. Nature calls with many voices to old and young to come and spend some time with her and to find rest, recreation and enjoyment.

These calls come from the mountains, the woods, the fields, the lakes, the rivers, and the seas. During these summer days my junior sermons will be nature sermons, in answer to these calls. We must all decide to which of these calls we want to respond. Sometimes it is possible to combine pleasure and profit by visiting summer schools or conferences which are generally held in the mountains, in the woods, on the college campus, by the lake, or by the sea.

One of the finest things about these meetings is that children are not forgotten, but some special provision is made for their instruction and amusement. It is beginning to be understood that children are too important to be neglected.

The call of the mountains is the one that comes loudest to some people. They do not care much for the seashore, but are delighted with the mountains. Our first nature sermon will, therefore, be about the mountains, not because the preacher likes them the

best, for he likes all nature, but because we must begin somewhere, and the mountains stand out so prominently that they arrest our attention at once.

Do you know that this world would be far less beautiful and much poorer if it were not for the mountains? God made the mountains to beautify and enrich the world.

The call of the mountains is threefold. They call us *to look up*. The Greek word for man means "the being with the uplifted face." Man was made to look up, and wherever the mountains are they call us to look up.

When I was a boy I often looked up at the mountains, which were not many miles away, and some of my first boyhood thoughts were about the great world that lay beyond those mountains, and some of my dreams and plans for the future were influenced by those mountains.

As a young man I traveled across the State of Pennsylvania, and wondered at the grandeur of the mountain scenery in our own beloved State. Since then I have traveled in many States of our own country and through eight different foreign countries, and nowhere have I seen as beautiful mountain scenery, except, perhaps, in Switzerland, and even that did not arouse in me the wonder and admiration which the mountains of my own State had caused earlier in life.

Two of the finest mountain views I ever had were those of the Jungfrau and Mont Blanc in Switzerland. Of the latter mountain Lord Byron wrote:

"Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains;
They crowned him long ago,
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of light,
With a diadem of snow."

Wherever the mountains may be, at home or abroad, they call us to look up, and they draw our thoughts nearer to God.

The mountains also call us *to climb up*. They challenge as well as call. They make us feel as though we wanted to climb up to the top.

As mountains were round about Jerusalem, which made David think of the protecting care of Jehovah, so mountains are round about the city of Reading, where I live. Some years ago another minister and I climbed up to the top of one of these mountains where we had a grand view of our beautiful city.

I am reading a book written almost fifty years ago by a great English scientist, in which he speaks about climbing some of the great mountains of Europe. He shows how dangerous it was at that time to climb some of these mountains, but speaks of the wonderful experiences and views which made all the danger and trouble worth while.

About eleven years ago, on the twenty-third of July, 1913, another minister and I went up to the side of the great Jungfrau mountain in Switzerland, where we had a good view of the glaciers, snowballed each other, picked some Alpine flowers and saw some of the most beautiful Swiss scenery.

Jesus loved the mountains. He often went up into the mountains to pray, to preach, to rest, and to talk with His Father.

The mountains call us to climb up to better and higher things in life. There is always room at the top, and the boys and girls who climb the hills of knowledge and the hills of difficulty and the hills of goodness will make their mark in life. Many a poor boy and girl has climbed up the steep mountain of success and is now enrolled in the hall of fame.

But the mountains also call us *to live up,* and this is the best challenge of all.

St. Paul tells us to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God." And he tells us how to do this: "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth."

It is said that a little boy once stood up in a Quakers' meeting and said, "I want to be gooder and gooder, and better and better, till there's no bad left in me." I am sure that if he acted on that purpose both his grammar and his character became better.

You must begin early in life, boys and girls, to lift up your eyes unto the mountains, to respond to their call as they challenge you to higher and better things, and to live up to the highest standards of life, then you will achieve success and will make the most and the best of yourselves.

XXVIII.

INTO THE WOODS

"And sleep in the woods."—EZEK. 34:25.

THIS is the only place in the Bible where the word "woods" is found; although the word "wood," meaning woods or forests, is found more than twenty times. The woods call us as well as the mountains, and it is pleasant to spend some time among the trees. I have had the pleasure of spending some time among the trees almost every summer of my life, so far as I can remember. In attending summer schools and conferences during the past twenty-five years, I am happy to say that most of them were held among the trees. On the campus at Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster; at Ursinus College, Collegeville; at Harvard University, Cambridge; at Auburn Seminary, New York; at Mount Gretna; at Northfield, Mass., and other places, there are beautiful trees which help to make those places attractive.

The trees, like the mountains, call us to themselves, that we may enjoy and profit by their shade. They, too, add to the health and beauty of the world. They have much to do with the climate, the weather, and other things that help to control our health and happiness.

When it is clear, when the sun shines, the trees are said to breathe out oxygen and to breathe in

carbonic acid gas, and in this way they help to purify the air and to make it better for us. The air we need must have oxygen in it, and the air we breathe out has carbonic acid gas in it. In this way God balances things in His world.

Many persons are building cottages and bungalows in the woods, where they go to live during the summer months. Others put up tents in the woods, and spend some time in camping there.

In the verse from which our text is taken, God makes a promise to His people. Indeed the whole chapter is very beautiful. He speaks of the way in which His sheep were treated. The shepherds did not take care of them. They were scattered abroad. God discharged the shepherds, and He said: "I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down." And in one verse He says: "And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell securely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods."

Jesus also loved the trees, and spent a great deal of time among them. The Mount of Olives, where He often went, was so called because of the olive trees that covered a great part of it. There were also olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He spent some of His last sad hours on earth. One of the most beautiful poems that has been written about our Lord has to do with the woods. It was written by Sidney Lanier, an American poet, who was born in Macon, Greorgia, February 3, 1842. These are the words:

"Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him;
The little gray leaves were kind to Him;
The thorn tree had a mind to Him,
When into the woods He came.

"Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content,
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When death and shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last;
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last,
When out of the woods He came."

The olive trees, among which our Lord spent so much of His time, were useful then and are useful now. The two products of the trees which we know best are the fruit, which we eat green as "olives," and the oil, which is very soothing and healing. The wood is also useful and we read that the doors and posts of Solomon's temple were made of olive wood.

In our day, boys and girls hear a great deal about conserving the forests, which means saving the trees of our woods from destruction by fire or in other unnecessary ways. Our people have been very careless with regard to the forests, and now we are beginning to feel it. Our Boy Scouts are trained to put out forest fires, and are taught to take care of trees.

One of Aesop's fables is about "The Trees and the Axe," and it is translated as follows: "A man came into the forest, and made a petition to the Trees to provide him a handle for his axe. The

Trees consented to his request, and gave him a young ash tree. No sooner had the man fitted from it a new handle to his axe than he began to use it, and quickly felled with his strokes the noblest giants of the forest. An old Oak, lamenting when too late the destruction of his companions, said to a neighboring Cedar: 'The first step has lost us all. If we had not given up the rights of the Ash, we might yet have retained our own privileges, and have stood for ages.'"

In some countries the law requires the planting of another tree whenever one is cut down, so that the forests may not be entirely destroyed.

I do not have time in this sermon to speak of the life in the woods—the animals, birds, snakes and insects that are found in the woods. There is a great deal to learn in our woods and no one can spend any length of time in the woods without being better and wiser for it. "The groves were God's first temples," and if we answer the call of the woods in the right spirit we shall find ourselves nearer to God.

XXIX.

THE WONDERFUL RIVER

"There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God."—PSALM 46:4.

NEARLY all of the great cities of the world have grown up near the rivers of the world. And many of these rivers help to make the cities glad, as the river spoken of in our text makes glad the city of God.

When I was a boy in school we sang some of our geography lessons. We took up every state of our country and named the capital and the river on which it is located. It was very interesting to hear the whole class, and sometimes the whole school, sing out the song of the states: "Maine, Augusta, on the Kennebec River; New Hampshire, Concord, on the Merrimac River; Vermont, Montpelier, on the Winooski River; Massachusetts, Boston, on the Charles River; Rhode Island, Providence, on the Providence River; Connecticut, Hartford, on the Connecticut River; New York, Albany, on the Hudson River; Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, on the Susquehanna River;" and so on.

They do not teach geography in this way now-a-days, because they may not think it very necessary for the pupils to know on what rivers the capitals are situated. But the reason I mention this is to point out the fact that about every capital city of our

country is on a river, and the river helps to make the city glad.

Without its rivers, Philadelphia would not be the great and important city it has become. The city of London is made much more attractive by the Thames River, with its beautiful embankments where many monuments have been erected, and its fine bridges which are daily crossed by an immense amount of traffic. The Seine River adds much to the beauty of Paris, and its bridges are among the finest in the world. Florence, on the Arno River, is said to be one of the most beautiful cities of the world, and the river does much to make the city glad and beautiful. And so I might go on, filling page after page, telling about the cities of the world and the rivers that help to make them glad.

Of all the rivers that I have seen, the Hudson River in our country and the Rhine River in Germany are among the most beautiful. I spent the greater part of a day sailing up the Rhine River on one of the beautiful steamboats which are used there, and I never had so much of interest and beauty crowded into one day as I saw there. If there is a more beautiful and interesting river than the Rhine anywhere in the world, I do not know where it is. The beautiful mountain scenery on both sides of the river, the slopes with their vineyards and gardens and truck patches, the rugged rocks and the towering peaks, the beautiful cities and towns and villages, and the grand castles both ancient and modern, together with the legends and stories connected with them, fill every minute of

one's time with interest and admiration and exclamation.

But of all the rivers in the world, there is one that is most unique. There are many rivers that are larger and more useful and more beautiful, but "there is none which has been more spoken of by mankind" than the Jordan River. It is nearly a hundred miles long, and where it empties into the Sea of Galilee it sinks as low as six hundred and eighty feet below the level of the ocean.

But what makes this river so famous? The fact that Jesus spent so much of his ministry in that section. He was baptized by John in the River Jordan. He was often on the Sea of Galilee, into which the Jordan pours its waters. Thousands of Christians from all parts of the world visit the Holy Land every year, and go to see the places made sacred by the presence of our Lord when on earth, and among these are the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee.

Sir George Adam Smith, who wrote one of the best books ever written about the Holy Land, says at the end of one of his chapters: "And so what was never a great Jewish river has become a very great Christian one."

I read a story some time ago of a wonderful river, about which I want to tell you.

In a certain city, the palace of the king and the houses of his servants were warmed and served by a river which flowed underground. The river did not freeze in the depth of winter, nor grow hot in the height of summer. It kept all the rooms of the

palace warm at all times through pipes that were laid to them from the river. Every night the water flowed through fine pipes and washed the windows of the palace clean and bright. And the river made all the repairs that were necessary in the palace and in the city—marble columns, ivory furniture, soft cushions, musical instruments, anything and everything. The river kept its own walls and pipes in good order. All this the river did, and much more which I do not have time to tell you about.

Was not this a wonderful river? You may be surprised when I tell you that this is not a fairy story, but a true story. And this wonderful river is much nearer to you than you think. In fact, it is within you.

The city is your body, the palace is your brain, the king is your mind. The river is your blood, and it builds columns, which are your bones; and it stretches telegraph wires, which are your nerves; and it cleanses the palace windows, which are your eyes; and it mends and tunes the musical instruments, which are your vocal cords; and it repairs the ivory furniture, which are your teeth; and it renews and repairs everything day by day, so that you may be well and strong and happy.

Your body should be a city of God, who built it for your soul, and made it wonderful and beautiful, and your blood is the river, "the streams whereof make glad the city of God."

XXX.

BEHOLD THE BIRDS

"Behold the birds of the heaven."—MATT. 6:26.

TWO weeks ago, in speaking to you about the woods, I said that I did not have time to tell you about the creatures that live in the woods and among the trees. Today I want to tell you about one kind of those creatures, the birds.

I just returned from a summer school that was held in a building among the trees. The first thing I heard every morning when I awoke was the birds singing in the trees. And there were a number of these birds there, different kinds of them, as I could tell by the songs and the chatter and the chirping.

The most beautiful of the birds I heard and saw there was the flicker, the golden-winged woodpecker, which is also called yellow-hammer, high-holder, pigeon wood-pecker, and yucca. I remember these birds from my boyhood days, when I saw many of them. I have always been fond of birds, and have taken a great interest in them all my life. I think every boy and girl ought to learn to know the birds of the neighborhood in which they live.

Jesus loved the birds. He was anxious that even they should not be overlooked. And if you will look into your Bibles you can find out what kind of birds Jesus talked about. As He noticed the

poor and the needy, the sick and the crippled among the people, so He noticed the poor and neglected birds.

In the verse from which our text is taken, He says: "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them." St. Matthew does not name the birds, but if you will look up the same story in St. Luke's gospel you will find that he reports Jesus as saying: "Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds!"

The raven was the only bird of its order which the law of Moses called unclean. It was a large, black bird like our crow, only larger. It is said that the ravens do not care for their young like other birds do. And they are great eaters: it takes a great deal to satisfy them. But Jesus said: "God feedeth them." He watches over and cares for the birds, even the ravens.

One of the birds most considerate of its young is the robin. Not long ago I was at a home near the ocean, and as I sat on the porch enjoying the ocean breeze I saw a robin fly into the porch and feed its young in their nest, which was in a honeysuckle bush near where I sat. Both the parent birds came regularly all day long bringing food to their hungry babies in the nest.

Jesus also spoke of the sparrow, another lowly bird. The ravens were looked upon as unclean, but the sparrows were used as food, and many of

them were caught and sold for this purpose. Jesus asked, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?" (Matthew 10:29), and then adds: "And not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father." And in Luke 12:6 He says: "Are not five sparrows sold for two pence? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God."

But the reason Jesus says all this about the birds is to teach us that our Heavenly Father, Who cares for the birds and all other creatures, will much more care for us, because we are His children. Jesus says: "Fear not: ye are of more value than many sparrows."

It is said that there are at least thirty-three different kinds of sparrows in America, and then think of all the many other kinds of birds; and God cares for them all.

The only other bird that Jesus mentions is the eagle, whom we call "the king of birds." But Jesus uses the word in its lowest sense, and does not have reference to the birds we call eagles, but rather to vultures. He says: "Whersoever the carcass is, there will the eagles (margin, 'vultures') be gathered together."

It would be interesting if I could tell you about all the persons who have loved birds, but I have room for only one such reference. I believe that all good people, who have the spirit of Jesus, love the birds.

There was a very good man, who lived in Italy more than seven hundred years ago, who was a great lover of birds. His name was St. Francis of

Assissi. St. Francis loved everything that God had made, and he was especially fond of birds. He cared for the young robins, he built nests for the turtle-doves, and the birds loved and trusted him so much that they came and sat on his hands and on his head. Many stories and legends are told about him.

It is said that he once preached a sermon to the birds. He went into a field and saw a great many birds on the trees and on the ground. He told his friends that he was going to preach to his feathered brothers. As soon as he began to preach, all the little birds that were on the trees fluttered down and sat around him listening, like a junior congregation. St. Francis told them that they should always be thankful to God and praise and love Him because He had given them the power to fly, and food, and clothing, and shelter. Then, it is said, all the little birds began to open their beaks and to beat their wings and to bow their heads reverently to the earth. And then they sang a song of praise to show St. Francis that his words had pleased them greatly.

XXXI.

MORE ABOUT BIRDS

"I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there."
—I KINGS 17:4.

LAST week I told you about birds, but I could not finish my sermon for fear it would be too long. I had several good stories about birds left over, and so I am going to tell you more about birds.

I have taken my text from the right chapter, for some one has called this "A Children's Chapter." He says that he often read it when he was a boy, and was very fond of the story in which the ravens fed Elijah and the story of the jar of meal and the cruse of oil.

In my last sermon I told you about the ravens, of whom Jesus says: "Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them." Here Jesus tells us how God feeds the ravens, but in the chapter from which our text is taken we read how God used the ravens to feed His prophet, Elijah.

Elijah was a great prophet who told the king and the people the will of God. He had to tell Ahab, the wicked king, that there would be a great drought in the land, when there would be no rain and no crops for three years and there would be much

suffering among the people. All this came upon them because of their sins and their wickedness.

After Elijah had delivered his message, God said to him: "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there."

Elijah did as God told him to, "and the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook." It is no wonder that Jesus said long afterward: "Of how much more value are ye than the birds!"

We are so used to having our food three times a day that we do not always stop to consider where it comes from or how we get it. God feeds us just as truly as He fed Elijah, and we ought never to sit down to a meal without giving Him thanks. Our food comes to us from all parts of the country and even from other countries across the seas. It is not brought to us by the ravens, but the ships bring it across the seas and the trains bring it across the land, so that we have food from all parts of the world on our tables.

I told you a legend of St. Francis of Assissi and the birds in my last sermon. Now I want to tell you another one about him.

One day St. Francis and another monk came to a place called Alviano to preach, and stopped in the market-place. It was evening, and the swallows were flying about among the walls and turrets, cir-

cling around and around, and darting in and out of their nests under the eaves, making quite a noise. The two Friars sang their evening hymn of praise, and the people began to gather around them, knowing that St. Francis would have a message for them. Everybody was quiet but the swallows. Lower and lower they circled over the market-place, and their cries became louder and louder so that they drowned every other sound. At last St. Francis looked up and spoke to them gently: "My dear sister swallows, it seems to me that the time has come when I should have a chance to speak; now you have said enough! Hear, therefore, God's word and keep still and quiet while I preach!" At once the birds were quiet, and they made no more noise so long as St. Francis preached.

Another bird story comes to us from Italy. There was a great carnival in one of the cities. The people from far and near went into the city to enjoy the carnival. There was one poor boy who remained at home. He would rather play with his pet sparrow than go into the city. When everybody else was gone away, he took out the cage of his pet, opened the door, took the sparrow on the forefinger of his one hand and fed it with the other. They had a happy time together. The boy told his love to the bird, and the bird chirped its love back to him. They played a long time, but all at once the boy noticed that the sky was very black and he heard an awful sound. The cattle were running around in fear, the earth began to shake, the houses began to fall. It was an earthquake.

The boy quickly put his sparrow into the cage, and hung the cage on its peg. Then his own house began to shake and was broken into pieces, and the walls and the roof fell down. The boy's brother had come home, and threw his arms around his neck, and so they died together clasped in each other's arms, and the ruins covered them. All that was seen of the boy was his hand, which reached up out of the ruins. In one of the shocks of earthquake which followed, the door of the sparrow's cage was unlatched, and the bird flew out. And where do you think it went? To the hand of its dear young master on which it had perched not long before, on the hand that was stretched out of the ruins, it sat down.

XXXII.

A WATERED GARDEN

"And thou shalt be like a watered garden."—Isa. 58:11.

DURING the War a great many persons began making gardens. The vacant lots of our cities, the commons which were usually full of weeds, were turned into beautiful gardens in which all kinds of vegetables grew. It was like Isaiah says in another verse, in the fifty-first chapter: And God "hath made her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Jehovah."

The war is over, but many of the gardens are kept up and this summer they are well watered, especially in our city, for we have had much rain this summer.

I do not know how many of my boys and girls have gardens of their own, but I think it is a good thing, wherever possible, for boys and girls to have gardens, or at least plots or beds, of their own, in which to grow vegetables or flowers.

It seems, as we read the Book of Isaiah, that when God spoke of the bad people He thought of a garden without water. In the thirtieth verse of the first chapter we read: "For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water." And when He spoke of good people He thought of a watered garden, as in our text: "And

thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

When God first made man He placed him into a garden as the most beautiful and the pleasantest place for him. And it was a watered garden, for in Genesis 2:10 we read: "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden."

Although God did all this for Adam and Eve, it was in this garden—the Garden of Eden—that they disobeyed God, and were driven out of the garden.

Three other gardens are spoken of in the Bible:

The Garden of Gethsemane, somewhere on the side of the Mount of Olives, was a place where Jesus often went with His disciples for quiet and rest. It was in this garden that He spent His last hours before He was betrayed and arrested and crucified. Here by His wonderful obedience He won the victory over temptation and became willing to drink the bitter cup. By His obedience He made good what the disobedience of Adam and Eve had spoiled.

After Jesus died on the cross His body was buried in a garden which was not far away. St. John says it this way: "Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. There they laid Jesus." It was in this garden that He arose from the grave on Easter morning. We may therefore call it the Garden of the Resurrection. There He won the victory over death and the grave.

And the Garden of Paradise is spoken of in the Book of Revelation. It is our eternal home, where sin cannot enter, where nothing that is evil can find a place, but where there is peace and joy forever in the Lord.

Some one has written these beautiful lines about gardens:

"The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth—
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth."

In the book of Jeremiah, where God speaks of restoring His people and of bringing them back to their home, He says: "And their soul shall be as a watered garden."

That is the picture I want every one of you to think of. Our hearts and lives are to be the garden of the Lord, and He wants them to be a watered garden—a garden well planted, well watered, and well looked after.

You know that one of the most important things in a garden is that good seeds are sown and planted there. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." In childhood is the time when the good seed must be sown in the garden of the heart. Faith, hope, love, purity, humility, meekness, kindness, honesty, and truth are some of the seeds that must be planted when the heart is young so that they may bear rich fruit in a beautiful life and character in manhood and womanhood.

And the garden must be well watered to be beautiful and fruitful. When there is a dry spell, the

faithful gardener will take the sprinkling-pot or the hose and will water his garden regularly every day so that the plants will not shrivel up and die. Our soul-gardens need the refreshing showers of the Holy Spirit, and we must ask God day by day to give us these showers of blessing.

And the garden must be well looked after. It requires constant care and attention. The weeds must be kept out so that the good fruit may grow.

It is said that near some farm houses there used to be a corner called "the devil's nook," which was left to itself and became a wilderness. It was believed that by giving one spot over to the evil one, he would not injure the rest of the farm.

You can often tell what kind of people live in a house by looking at their garden. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the great writer, was once visited by a man who was a skeptic, who said that children should not be taught religion but should be allowed to grow up naturally. The two walked out into Mr. Coleridge's garden and found it a mass of weeds. The skeptic asked him why he allowed his garden to be in such a state, why he did not pull the weeds and plant flowers. Mr. Coleridge answered with a smile, "Oh, I want my garden to grow naturally, as you think children ought to grow."

Our soul-gardens need care and cultivation. We must pull up the weeds of sin and bad habits or they will soon overrun the soul and spoil it. And we must cultivate the good things that we may bear abundant fruit to the glory of God.

XXXIII.

A BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT

"Behold, a basket of summer fruit."—Amos 8:1.

ON almost every dining-table at the present time we see a basket or a dish of summer fruit. In it we find bananas, oranges, apples, plums, pears, peaches, and now and then, grapes. There are also found on many tables, at one or another of the meals, cantaloupes, watermelons, pineapples, blackberries and huckleberries. Less than a week ago I partook of a meal at a friend's home where delicious strawberries were served.

Most of us are fond of fruit, and this year we are happy because there is such an abundance of it. The harvest services which will be held in most of our churches during August and September will show an abundance and variety of grain, flowers, and fruit, and some of the harvest-home sermons will doubtless be preached from this very text.

The prophet Amos, to whom God showed this vision of a basket of summer fruit, lived in Palestine almost twenty-seven hundred years ago. A basket of summer fruit in his country would be somewhat different from one in our country.

Palestine is said to be a land of orchards. All the fruit-trees of the temperate zone are found there. The most common are the apricot, the fig, the orange, pomegranate, mulberry, pistachio, almond, and walnut. But the two chief fruit trees of Palestine are the olive and the grape-vine.

A basket of summer fruit such as Amos saw may have had in it apricots, figs, oranges, olives, and grapes.

But God meant to teach Amos a lesson by means of this basket of summer fruit, as He did with all the visions He showed him. In order to understand this lesson fully we ought to know a little Hebrew. There is a play on words here, a sort of a pun. The Hebrew word for "summer fruit" is *kaitz*. And there is another Hebrew word, spelled *ketz*, but pronounced the same as the other, which means "end."

If you read the first three verses of the eighth chapter of Amos, with this idea in mind you will know what God means to say to Amos: "Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me: and behold, a basket of summer fruit. And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit (*kaitz*). Then said Jehovah unto me, The end (*ketz*) is come upon my people Israel: I will not pass by them any more. And the songs of the temple shall be wailings in that day, saith the Lord Jehovah; the dead bodies shall be many; in every place shall they cast them forth with silence."

In this vision of the basket of summer fruit God wants to tell Amos that "as summer fruit, when ripe, may not last long, so Israel, ripe in her sins, shall now come to an end."

We all know that a basket of summer fruit, however beautiful it may be, if allowed to stand too long will decay. There is generally one of the fruits that begins to decay first, and that infects one of

the others, and so one after another is specked until all of them decay.

When one apple in a barrel begins to decay it will soon infect others, and if nothing is done to check the process the whole barrel of apples will decay and be spoiled.

When a boy or a girl becomes bad, he or she can do a great deal of harm, and may spread their bad thoughts and habits among many boys and girls. When one boy in a group swears or uses other bad words, it will not be long until the whole group learns and uses those words. A bad habit in one girl is soon copied by others.

A little boy, whose mother told him not to have anything to do with boys who used bad words, was one day playing with some other children. One of the boys, to whom he had lent his drum, became angry and used ugly words. Johnny marched right up to the boy and asked for his drum, saying, "I must go to my mother." "Why? What for?" the children all cried. "Mamma never lets me play with boys who use bad words," said Johnny. "Well, I won't use any more bad words if I play with you," said the boy. "I'll ask my mother," said Johnny, "and if she says I may, then I will; but I shouldn't like to learn such words." "Tell your mother, Johnny," answered the boy, "I'm done now; she needn't ever be afraid any more of using bad words, for I just won't—that's all, if she thinks so." And he kept his word, and Johnny did not become specked because he had a wise and good mother.

Is it not a grand thing that we have found ways in which to keep some of the summer fruit from decay so that we may enjoy it during the long winter months?

Canning is a process by which many of these fruits are preserved and kept for future use. This process was found out during the Civil War when it was found necessary to put food away for the soldiers in a form in which they might carry it on long marches. It is said that now there are almost a billion cans of food matter put up in the United States in a single year.

Cold storage is another way in which our summer fruit is kept for the winter. When I was a boy, my grandfather buried apples in the garden and covered them with straw, and on Christmas we enjoyed the delicious summer fruit. But by means of cold storage fruit may be kept a long time, and sometimes it is possible to have old and new apples in the same dish.

God also has a way of keeping us and preserving us from danger and harm and from sin and evil, so that we will not fall into decay and destruction. Let us often pray this little prayer:

"Father, lead me day by day.
Ever in Thine own sweet way;
Teach me to be pure and true,
Show me what I ought to do.

"When in danger make me brave,
Make me know that Thou canst save;
Keep me safe by Thy dear side,
Let me in Thy love abide."

XXXIV.

LESSONS FROM THE SPIDER

"And whose trust is a spider's web."—Job 8:14.

THE word "spider" is found only twice in the Bible, and both of them do not refer to the spider itself, but to the "spider's web." The other text is found in Isaiah 59:5, "And weave the spider's web."

The text I was going to use is Proverbs 30:28, which reads: "The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in king's palaces." But when I came to look it up in the American Revised Version, which is the text I always use, I found that the word spider was not there at all, for the verse reads:

"The lizard taketh hold with her hands, yet is she in king's palaces."

Most persons dislike spiders, and I think the best thing for small children is to keep away from them. The house is not a good place for spiders, and a spider's web in a room is not a sign of cleanliness.

The spider is not the same kind of an insect as the wasp, the bee, and the ant. These all have six legs and are born fullgrown. The spider has eight legs, and is born as a baby spider and grows to be larger by and by. The body of the spider is hard and is made in rings. The spider's body itself, however, is soft, but its skin is tough, and it changes its skin

often when it is very young. Most of the spiders have eight eyes. Spiders never have any wings. On the head of the spider are two short fangs, or jaws, with which it bites, and they have the poison in them. The bite of a common spider does not do a man or child much harm.

All spiders spin webs. The hind part of the spider is large and round, and it has six small round tubes. Each of these tubes is made of many very small tubes, which have in them a kind of glue out of which the web is made. When this glue is drawn out into the air it gets hard, is as fine as silk, and is woven into a net which we call a web.

Spiders make webs, nests and snares. The webs are to live in; the nests are for the baby spiders; and the snares are to catch food, such as flies, ants, bees, wasps, and other insects. When one of these insects gets into the web, the spider feels the line move and runs out to catch the insect. First she kills or stuns the prey with her fangs and their poison, then she winds a fine web around it, making a neat bundle which she carries off.

Spiders and their webs are very beautiful if looked at through a microscope. Spiders are also very neat. They hate dust and dirt, and will work very hard to rid their webs of any dirt that may gather upon them. If they cannot get the dirt out of the web any other way they will cut the dirty piece out and mend the web with new lines. The poet Alexander Pope has written this couplet:

"The Spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,
Feels at each thread and lives along the line."

Spiders are very busy little creatures, and the wise man might have told the sluggard to go to the spider, as well as to the ant, to consider her ways and be wise.

Many stories and fables have been told about spiders, and some superstitious people say that a spider is "lucky" and to kill it is "unlucky." Some one has said that if it were not for the spiders and the work they are doing we should be like the Egyptians in the time of Moses—plagued and eaten up of flies.

A number of stories have been told of men who were saved by hiding in caves over the openings of which spiders wove their webs and the pursuers went on assured that no one was in the cave.

In the early days of Christianity there was a good man by the name of Felix of Nola. He was hated for his religion, and had to flee for his life. He went to a lonely place that was full of rocks, and hid himself in one of the caves among these rocks. While he was hiding there he saw a spider weaving her web across the opening of the cave. After the web covered the mouth of the cave he heard men's voices near by, and he gave himself up for lost, for he knew they were seeking him. They came to the mouth of the cave and there they stopped. When they saw the opening covered with a spider's web, they said, "No one has passed in here or the web would be broken," and they went on to look elsewhere. When they were gone Nola escaped, and when he spoke of his experience afterwards he used

to say: "Where God is, a spider's web is as a wall; where He is not, a wall is but as a spider's web."

Here is where the meaning of our text comes in. The trust of the godless is said to be like a spider's web—they have nothing strong to depend upon. But for those who love God even a spider's web can be a protection.

When I was a school boy I was delighted with the story of Robert Bruce and the spider, as told by Sir Walter Scott.

Robert Bruce had the right to be the next king of Scotland, but there were many obstacles in the way and he was so discouraged that he felt like giving up all further effort to enjoy his right. He lay on a wretched bed in a cabin thinking about his plans, when he saw a spider hanging at the end of a long thread, trying to swing himself from one beam in the roof to another, for the purpose of fixing the line on which he meant to stretch his web. He saw that the insect made the attempt again and again without success, until it had tried six times and failed. He remembered that he, too, had made six unsuccessful efforts to gain his point and had failed. While he was wondering what the spider would do, he saw the insect muster all its force and make a seventh attempt, which was successful. He resolved to go forth and make another effort to secure the throne which belonged to him, and he succeeded and became King Robert the First, of Scotland. We might almost say that a spider made him king.

XXXV.

THE GREAT, WIDE SEA

"The sea is his, and he made it."—PSALM 95:5.

IN the first chapter of Genesis we read: "And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it was good."

Besides the ocean, the word "sea" in the Bible sometimes means the Mediterranean Sea, the Dead Sea, the Red Sea, the Sea of Galilee, and even the Nile River, and the Euphrates River. In the one hundred and fourth Psalm the writer says:

> "Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
> Wherein are things creeping innumerable,
> Both small and great beasts.
> There go the ships;
> There is leviathan whom thou hast formed to play therein."

This refers to the Mediterranean Sea, which was the largest body of water most of the people of Palestine ever saw in Bible times.

Not long ago I was at the seashore, and I thought of the many readers of my Junior Sermons and how I might preach to them about the ocean which has so many lessons to teach us. I have been at the ocean, on the ocean, across the ocean, and in the

ocean, and if the Psalmist called the Mediterranean Sea "great and wide," what would he have called the Atlantic Ocean or the Pacific Ocean? I had the pleasure of crossing the ocean in one of the fastest steamships in the world, and yet it took five and a half days to go from New York to Liverpool. This gives us an idea of the greatness of the ocean. It takes most steamships ten days to make the voyage, and some even longer than that.

There is much more water on the surface of the earth than land. If you would divide the earth's surface into seven parts, five of the parts would be water and only two of them land. The ocean is also very deep. The Pacific Ocean is believed to be deeper than any other sea, and its average depth is almost three miles. The greatest depths of the ocean are from five to six miles, and there may be places where it is seven miles deep. It is quite likely that the greatest depths of the ocean are about the same as the greatest heights of the mountains on land. There are some men who think that if the highest mountains were sunk into the deepest depths of the ocean, the waters of the latter would easily cover them.

The sea is also very strong, and it has dashed great ships to pieces and has tossed around great rocks as though they were mere pebbles.

One of the interesting questions about the sea is, why it never gets any larger. This question was answered more than two thousand years ago by a man with a long name—Ecclesiastes, which means "the preacher." He said: "All the rivers run into

the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again." This Bible writer must have known something about what is called evaporation, which means that the sun sucks up some of the water from the sea, which is gathered into clouds and falls upon the earth as rain, and flows into creeks and rivers, and at last gets back into the ocean again. This process is going on all the time, and in this way God balances the water supply of the earth.

Another interesting thing about the sea is the tides. If you spend a day at the seashore, sitting in the sand and watching the waves, as I have often done, you will notice that the waves come up higher and higher upon the beach until they have reached the highest point, which is called "high tide." Then they begin to go down again, lower and lower, until they reach the lowest point, which is called "low tide." The rising tide is sometimes called "flood tide" and the sinking tide "ebb tide." The high tide and low tide are about six hours apart, so that there are two high tides and two low tides every twenty-four hours.

Some day you will learn all about the cause of the tides in school, and then you will know more about them. I might say that the tides are caused by the moon. The moon goes around the earth all the time, but we do not always see it. It is one of the laws of nature that all matter pulls, or attracts, all other matter, and is pulled, or attracted, by it. The whole earth and the whole moon feel this pull, but the water on the earth, because it is not solid,

is pulled especially toward the moon and this heaps the water up into waves and causes the tides. If the moon had oceans, the pull of the earth would cause tides there also, and as the earth is very much larger than the moon these tides would be much greater than those of our oceans.

I do not have time to tell you now about what is found in the sea, which would be too long a story, but some day I may tell you something about that and I am sure you will find it very interesting. I also wanted to tell you something about the Sea of Galilee, "where Jesus loved so much to be," but I must leave that for another sermon.

The Psalmist says in our text that God made the sea, and it is His. God is greater than the sea. The sea is very wide and very deep, but God's mercy is still wider, and His love still deeper. As a great hymn writer, Frederick W. Faber, has put it:

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty."

The sea is very strong, but God is stronger. Another great hymn writer, William Cowper, says about Him:

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

The winds and the waves obey His will, and when He says, "Peace, be still," there is a great calm. I was not afraid to cross the ocean because God is there—the sea is His, and He made it.

XXXVI.

PUT THE WHOLE CHILD TO SCHOOL

"And may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire."—I THES. 5:23.

VACATION days are over, and vacation sermons are over. School days are before us, and we must get down to solid work again. At one of the summer conferences I heard a lecturer quote the words which I have made the subject of my sermon, "Put the Whole Child to School."

When I was a boy, the chief thing that was thought of in a child's school life was the training of the mind, the learning of the things that were in the school books.

We learned a great deal that was helpful to us, but we learned it in a somewhat mechanical way. We had the school yards in which we could play during the short period of recess and the noon hour. We went to Sunday school and learned some Bible verses, and now and then some spiritual lessons that were helpful to us. But in those days you did not hear of putting the whole child to school. That is an idea that has arisen within recent years, and a great deal more will be said about it during the next ten or fifteen years than ever before.

Men and women have made a special study of children, and are trying to help them more and

more that their spirit and soul and body may be preserved entire. The mind needs training, and children must learn their lessons. But oh, how much more interesting the lessons are made in our day! By means of objects and stories and little plays the lessons are taught in such a nice and attractive way that children learn almost before they know it. Of course, when they grow older they must do harder lessons and must learn how to master them if they want to make anything worth while of themselves.

During the summer I have been reading the "Life of Sir Walter Scott," and was especially interested in his boyhood and the things that helped to make him a great man, a great poet, and a great novelist. When he was a man, his deepest regret was that he did not study harder when a boy, and he said that he would have given half of his reputation if he could rest the other half on a sound foundation of learning.

Your parents and teachers know better what is good for you and what you ought to study in your childhood than you do yourselves, and you ought to do your very best during your school days so that you will not have to regret your neglect when you grow to manhood and womanhood. No boy or girl ought to think of stopping school before they have graduated from the high school, and as many as possible ought to go to college or some other higher school of learning.

But the mind is not all of the child. The body must also be cared for and attended to and trained

aright, and I am glad to say that a great deal more care and attention are given to the health and strength of children than was done years ago. Playgrounds and exercises are provided for the children not only during the school months, but also during the vacation months, when trained young men and women look after the play and recreation of the children of all ages. The children's bodies are carefully examined and looked after by doctors and dentists and nurses, so that they may grow up to be stronger and healthier, and may be happier and more useful in life.

To speak again of Sir Walter Scott, some of you may know that he became a cripple when he was a little baby. When he was only eighteen months old he had a fever caused by the cutting of large teeth, and when the fever left him he had lost the power of his right leg. Everything that might be helpful to him was done for his recovery, but he remained lame all the rest of his life. He, however, exercised so much in the open air that he became strong and robust, and was healthy all his life after leaving school.

Perhaps the most neglected part of our children's training has been their moral and spiritual training. In the Christian homes of years ago the children received a great deal of spiritual attention from their parents, especially the mothers. They were familiar with the Bible, and knew many of the finest verses in the Bible by heart. In many of the so-called Christian homes of today, the parents are too busy to give much time to the spiritual training of their

children. They expect the Sunday school and the Church to do this work. But the best Sunday school cannot take the place of the mother in this work, but can only help the mother in her efforts to do it. A child spends about twenty-five hours a week in the public school, and only one hour in the Sunday school, where the lesson period is only fifteen or twenty minutes long. This is too short a time to give the right kind of spiritual training, and the children who do not receive additional attention at home fare very poorly in this respect.

Let me refer once more to Sir Walter Scott, to say that both his father and mother were devout Christians. They went to Church every Sunday, "attended by their fine family of young children, and their domestic servants" On Sunday evenings the children were examined in the Catechism and the sermons they had heard during the day. You will know from what I have said about him, that Sir Walter Scott received the help in his boyhood that would keep his spirit and soul and body entire.

A new day is coming, in fact it is about here, when more time and attention will be given to the religious training of our children. Many Churches and Sunday schools are preparing to give the children weekday religious instruction for two or three hours on some weekday afternoon, when they will be excused from the public schools and will be given school credits for what they will be taught in this way.

Some Churches are doing a little work through their Junior Congregations, where the children learn

some spiritual lessons from the story-sermons, and also through their Mission Bands and Junior Christian Endeavor societies, and, in recent years, through the Daily Vacation Bible Schools which are held during the summer months.

I will lengthen the sermon just enough to say that I believe that the children in our Church Orphans' Homes receive an almost ideal training to preserve entire their spirit and soul and body. In Bethany Orphans' Home, at Womelsdorf, whose anniversary many of us attended a week ago, the time of the average child of Junior Congregation age is better divided than that of the average child in most of our homes. He sleeps from nine to ten hours, works and studies about five to six hours a day, plays about three hours a day, is at the table about an hour and a half a day, receives religious training for an hour to an hour and a quarter a day during the week and four hours on Sunday, leaving some hours each day to be at liberty and to read and meditate and to attend to miscellaneous things. All this should be a blessing to any child.

XXXVII.

PERSEVERANCE

"The waters wear the stones."—Job 14:18.

THIS is a large subject for a simple sermon, but it is the best word I can think of for what I want to say. Steadfastness has almost the same meaning, but perseverance is a stronger word. It comes from two Latin words which mean very strict, or very severe. If you want to persevere in anything you must be very strict, very severe, with yourself, so that you may succeed.

It is not enough to put the whole child to school, about which I preached last week, but the child must persevere in its lessons in order to master them and to get the benefit from them which they are to give.

A few weeks ago I was on top of the Pocono Mountains, about eight thousand feet above the level of the sea. I heard the call of the mountains, and I had to climb up (in an automobile) to the very top. While up there, some friends took us to see a falls in a small creek right on top of the mountain. It is not a high falls, nor a very large one, but it is very beautiful. It shows how the creek has worn away the stones by running over them for many thousands of years, for, as our text says, "The waters wear the stones." That is a lesson of perseverance.

We all know how strong and hard a rock is, and how weak is a drop of water. But we can find many places where the waters have worn the stones and have made a way for themselves, sometimes wearing away hundreds of feet of rock. It is said that the Niagara Falls have worn back seven miles through the hard limestone over which they pour their thundering waters.

When I was at the seashore not long ago, I picked up shells and pebbles on the beach that had been worn smooth by the waters of the ocean. It takes the ocean a long time—many, many years—to wear some of these stones and shells so nice and smooth.

One of the great lessons for every schoolboy and schoolgirl to learn is this lesson of perseverance. It is not always the brightest scholar that learns the most. He may be beaten by the hard worker, the persevering boy, who keeps on with his lessons from day to day. In a race, it is not always the runner who takes the lead at the start that wins in the end; but the steady runner, who keeps up his pace all the time—the persevering runner—is the one who usually wins the race.

There was a boy, long, long ago, who got tired of his studies at school, especially mathematics, and he was going to give it all up. One day he said to himself, "I shall give it up, I shall never be a clever man." As he was thinking about it, he saw a piece of paper pasted on the cover of his book. As he looked at this paper he thought he would like to have it, but he could never tell why. He got

some water and soaked the paper off, and on it were written these words, "Go on, sir; go on, sir." And he said afterwards, "That was my master; I had no other master; that bit of paper was my master. I went on—I went on; I would not give up, and all through my life that has been my master, and to it I owe everything."

He learned the lesson of perseverance, and he became one of the greatest mathematicians and a great astronomer.

John Ruskin, the great English writer, says that of all the pieces of the Bible his mother taught him, the one that cost him the most to learn—and for that reason made him hate it when a boy—was the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm. If you look in your Bibles and see that it has one hundred and seventy-six verses, being the longest chapter in the Bible, you will not wonder that it took him a long time to learn it by heart. But when he was a man he said it had become of all the most precious to him, and he thanked his mother for her perseverance.

To show what a persevering teacher she was, he tells us that she kept on for three weeks to teach him the accent of the word "of" in the lines:

> "Shall any following spring revive
> The ashes of the urn?"

"But had it taken three years," he said, "she would have done it, having once undertaken to do it."

Persevering parents, persevering teachers, and persevering children help to make the great men and women of the world.

Our own beloved poet, Longfellow, wrote:

"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."

I hope every one of you, boys and girls, will learn the lesson of perseverance, and I am sure you will learn all the other lessons of life well; and as "the waters wear the stones," you will solve the hardest problems, do the hardest task, and win the greatest victory.

"One step more, and the race is ended;
One word more, and the lesson's done;
One toil more, and a long rest follows
At set of sun.

"Who would fail, for one step withholden?
Who would fail, for one word unsaid?
Who would fail, for a pause too early?
Sound sleep the dead."

XXXVIII.

"THE SHOES OF HAPPINESS"

"Whoso trusteth in Jehovah, happy is he."—PROV. 16:24.

ONE of our modern American poets, Edwin Markham, has put into verse an Eastern story which he calls "The Shoes of Happiness." It runs as follows:

In Turkey lived a sultan who was very sick. All the known remedies were used on him, but they did not help. Thirteen doctors tried their best to cure him. He cut off the head of one of them and sent the others away. Everybody was puzzled, and no one seemed to know what to do to help the sultan.

At last a fortune teller crept into the room and said she knew the only thing that would cure the sick man. He must send his vizier, his chief officer, to rummage the east and the west and find for him the shoes of a person wholly blest. She said to the sultan: "You must wear the shoes of a happy man." He called his vizier and said: "I need those shoes; let the shoes be here!" You know a sultan has power over the life and death of his subjects, and he told the vizier that he must bring the shoes or he would lose his head.

At early dawn the vizier started out with three companions to find a man with a happy heart from whom he could secure the shoes of happiness. He

thought it would be an easy matter to find these shoes, and he hoped to be back before evening to feed his doves.

His first thought was that the shoes of happiness could be found among the rich, "where the joy runs high," so he hurried his camels on to find the man who wore the desired shoes. As luck would have it, at the road's first turn they found a group of rich persons on their way to the boat to take a ride on the sea. He called to them: "How many are there with never a grief?" But they all had their wants and their woes, and he turned away disappointed.

He next went to the door of a poor man's cottage and said to him:

> "Ho, Hassan, ho! you have children seven;
> Is your gate not joy, is your hut not heaven?"

But the poor man had his troubles and his worries, and the shoes of happiness were not there.

The vizier and his companions went on their way and met many persons of all kinds whom they asked the one question and received from all the one reply, "for each heart carried its secret sigh." They did find a laughing boy, "too glad to know that he lived in joy," but his little torn shoes were too small for the sick sultan.

On down the road, under a tree, they found a poet making his rhyme, and the vizier thought he surely must be happy, but he shook his head as he replied: "Out of the grieving the poet sings."

They went through the grand bazaar where a

thousand things of all kinds were for sale, but the shoes of happiness none could give him.

They went to the fountains were the people gathered to fill their water-skins with the refreshing liquid. The vizier cried his question to every ear, "but each had his sorrow, his folly, his fear." He asked young and old the same question, but received from both the same answer. The young were restless to become older, and the old were sad because their young days had passed away.

They next turned to the tavern, where all kinds of men gathered and made merry. Surely, among these there must be one who wore the shoes they sought. The place rang with jokes and laughter, but as the vizier went from one to the other they all had their complaints and regrets and sorrows, and those who had traveled far and wide had never heard of "a mortal without a grief." He met a scholar who was pointed out to him as a happy man, but he said: "I am not glad; I am only wise."

At last someone said he knew of a happy man, but he lived far away in Ispahan. The vizier, afraid of losing his head, turned the four camels in that direction. When they arrived at Ispahan they found the man bent with sorrow, for he had lost his son. But he told them of a man about whom they said that he was ever glad. "But," said he, "he is afar in old Bagdad." When they found him, "he also carried a sorrow-pack." But he told them about another man in far Algiers of whom there was a rumor that he "never had tasted tears." When they

got near to the place they were told by the chief of a caravan that the man was dead.

The vizier's heart began to sink within him, and as they turned about to return home the trickling tears ran down his cheeks. As they came near their home city they heard sweet music on the morning air. They went aside to see whence the music came, and they found a young man "stretched out with his arm for a pillow," blowing the "thin, sweet sounds from a pipe of willow." At last they found the man they were looking for, and in answer to the vizier's question he said he had no care, no lands, no gold, nor "favor nor fortune nor fame," but he was well content with his lot.

The vizier ran out into the field and cried: "You are the man. Your shoes, then, quick for the great sultan."

The young man looked up with a carefree face and said: "Yes, mighty vizier,—but I have no shoes."

The poet does not tell us whether the vizier lost his head or whether the sultan died, but the shoes of happiness could not be found.

Does not this story teach us that happiness cannot be found in outward things, but is a matter of the heart and mind? If the sultan had been a Christian, and had read the Bible, he would have found the way to happiness in our text: "Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he." Christ says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," which means contentment, happiness and peace.

XXXIX.

HIDDEN PICTURES

"And destroy all their pictures." (A. V.)—NUM. 33:52.

THIS text is exactly what I was looking for, but I had to take it out of the Authorized Version, while, as you know, it is my rule to use the texts of the American Revised Version. The word "pictures" is found three times in the Authorized Version, but in every text in the American Revised Version a different word is used for it, so that the word "picture" or "pictures" is not found at all in the American Revised Version. Instead of saying, "And destroy all their pictures," the American Revised Version says, "And destroy all their figured stones."

When the children of Israel came near to the promised land, the land of Canaan, into which God was going to lead them, after wandering forty years in the wilderness, God told Moses what they were to do when they got into the promised land.

He said to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images, and demolish all their high places: and ye shall take possession of the land, and

dwell therein; for unto you have I given the land to possess it. * * * But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then shall those that ye let remain of them be as pricks in your eyes, and as thorns in your sides, and they shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. And it shall come to pass, that as I thought to do unto them, so will I do unto you."

It was the will of God that the children of Israel should keep themselves separate from the idolatrous people of the land, and should destroy all their pictures and images which might lead them to forget Him and to worship idols.

God knew very well what an influence pictures have on the mind even if they are carved on stones, and He did not want anything to remain in the country which would give them wrong ideas of religion. Pictures have just as great an influence on the mind today as they ever had, and the impression made on the mind through the eyes seems greater than that which is made through the ears.

A short time ago I heard the editor of one of our city newspapers tell the children of my Junior Congregation a story which shows how long pictures, even though they are hidden for a time, will last. He said that when he was a boy, over fifty years ago, they lived in a three-story house in one of the cities of our State. The third floor of this house, not being needed by the family, was given to the children as a play-room. They played different games, such as children delighted in in those days, but when they became tired of their play they got

into mischief. They drew all kinds of pictures on the walls, some good and some bad; and wrote sentences and expressions there, some nice and some naughty.

After some years, the room was papered and put to other use, and the pictures and writings were covered up. Not long ago the room was repapered. The old paper had to be scraped off the walls, and there on the bare walls were the pictures and sayings of fifty years ago; they had been hidden a long time, but now they were brought to light!

So it is with the pictures that are put into the minds of boys and girls, and written on the walls of their memory. Though they may be hidden for a long time, or even forgotten, they will come back to them some time. If they are bad pictures and bad memories they will haunt them when they grow to be men and women, and will give them much regret and sorrow. They will be, as God said to the children of Israel, as pricks in their eyes and as thorns in their sides, and will vex them in the years to come.

If they are good pictures, they will bring pleasant memories when they come back, and will give great joy to the soul.

The motion pictures of our day, which the children call "the movies," may do a great deal of good or a great deal of harm, according to their nature. We have not had them long enough to see the full fruitage of their influence, but we know of cases where they have led boys and girls into sin and crime. Parents ought to be very careful about

the pictures they allow their boys and girls to see, for when they are written on memory's walls they are hard to destroy and may come back to haunt them fifty years after.

In the home and the school and the Church, and even in "the movies," we ought to store the minds of our boys and girls with good pictures and stories, which, even though they may be hidden for years, will have a good influence upon their lives and characters, and will be a sweet memory to them a long time afterwards.

A famous portrait of Dante was painted on the walls of the Bargello, at Florence. For many years it was supposed that the picture had been destroyed. Men had heard of it, but no one living had ever seen it. But an artist who believed that it was still in existence, made up his mind that he would try and find it. He went into the place where it was said that it had been painted. The room was used as a storage room for lumber and straw. The walls were covered with a dirty whitewash. The artist had the rubbish taken away, and began to remove the whitewash from the wall. At last the beautiful picture of Dante, which had been hidden for many years, was brought to light and admired by the world.

In our work for the children we want to keep the image of Christ in their hearts beautiful and fresh, so that it will not be covered and hidden by sin.

XL.

THE CHILDREN'S KINGDOM

"To such belongeth the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. 19:14.

IF Jesus had not said so, no one would think of saying, or dare to say, that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the children, and to those who have a childlike spirit. The saying of Jesus means more than "of such is the kingdom of heaven;" it really means that the kingdom is theirs, belongs to them. St. Mark reports Jesus as saying, "To such belongeth the kingdom of God," which means about the same, but seems to be a little stronger than "the kingdom of heaven."

In reading the early history of the Christian Church we do not find very much to show that the men thought as much of the children as Jesus did and as He wanted them to think of them. Now and then some good Christian man or woman would do something special for the children, but the Church as a whole did not treat them as though the kingdom of God belonged to them.

It is only after almost nineteen hundred years of Christian history that the children are beginning to be thought of as Jesus thought of them, and now we hear a great deal about what ought to be done for the children, and many plans are being carried out to help them. It is true that more than a

hundred and forty years ago Robert Raikes and some of his friends started a Sunday school in England, which was the beginning of a great work for the children of the world. I took a picture of his beautiful statue on the Thames Embankment, in London, and prize it highly because he was one of the men who took the words of Jesus to heart,—"to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven."

The good that has been done by the Sunday school can never be told, but if every Sunday school teacher really believed that the kingdom of God *belonged* to the children, a great deal more would be done for them.

When I was a boy the Sunday schools were not prepared to do the splendid work they are doing now, but they taught the children to read the Bible and to learn some of the finest verses by heart. For every verse we could recite from memory we received a blue ticket, and for every five blue tickets we received a red ticket, and for a certain number of red tickets we received a New Testament, a Bible or some other book. Many of the verses of Scripture which I have in my heart today I learned in this way when a boy.

But during the past twenty-five years more progress has been made in Sunday school work and in other work for the children than in a hundred or a thousand years before that time, so that we may call this twentieth century "the Children's Century."

While the Junior Congregation is a new way of bringing the children into the Church services and

of teaching them lessons from God's Word by means of story-sermons, sermons to children have been preached for many years. I have in my library more than fifty books of children's sermons, most of which have been published within the last ten years, yet four of them are more than twenty-five years old, one of them having been published forty years ago, and another fifty years ago.

The fact that more and more of these books are published every year, and others which have to do with the moral and spiritual training of children, shows that the children are beginning to come to their own, and that many more persons are beginning to see that the kingdom of God belongs to them.

The great English preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon, who finished his work on earth thirty years ago, did a great deal to bring the children into his Church in London. He once declared: "I will say broadly that I have more confidence in the spiritual life of the children that I have received into this Church than I have in the spiritual condition of the adults thus received. I will even go further than that, and say that I have usually found a clearer knowledge of the Gospel and a warmer love to Christ in the child-converts than in the man-converts. I will even astonish you still more by saying that I have sometimes met with a deeper spiritual experience in children of ten and twelve than I have in certain persons of fifty and sixty. It is an old proverb that some children are born with beards. Some boys are

little men, and some girls are little old women. You cannot measure the lives of any of us by our ages."

Mr. Spurgeon himself began to preach when he was seventeen years old. What he says above seems to show that he believed that the kingdom of heaven belonged to the children.

Christ wants the children of all lands brought into the kingdom, for it belongs to them.

Almost fifty years ago there was a great famine in China. Fathers and mothers were selling their children as slaves to buy bread, and many people were dying. Little girls from six to seven years old were sold for one to two dollars apiece, and those from ten to twelve years for three, four and five dollars apiece. The missionaries used all their money, and all that they could get from their friends all over the world, to help save the people from starving.

A little girl, just four years old, was found by some of the mission workers up among the hills, almost naked, nearly starved, and all alone, crying feebly. No longer able to feed her or to care for her, her parents had left her alone among the hills to die. She was carried to the mission station where she was fed and cared for, and grew into a beautiful girl. At the same station there were five or six boys who had also been saved from starvation. One of these boys took a liking to the little girl. They went to school together and both became Christians. After they grew up they were married, and both became Christian workers.

I will close with the last verse of a hymn called "The World Children for Jesus," written by Margaret Coote Brown. She also believes that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the children, for she says:

"And all the dear babies, wherever they grow,
So cunning, so gracious, so wee,
Are God's darling children; and Jesus loves them
Just as He loves you and me."

XLI.

THE BURNING BUSH

"And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."—Ex. 3:3.

WHILE Moses was keeping the flocks of his father-in-law, he led them to the back of the wilderness and came to Mount Horeb, called the mountain of God. And there he saw a strange sight. He saw a bush on fire, and the bush was not burned up.

And Moses said, "I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." And when God saw that Moses turned aside, He called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses." And Moses answered, "Here am I." And God said to him: "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Then God spoke to Moses about His people Israel, and told him He wanted him to bring them out of Egypt, where they were in bondage, and to lead them to the promised land, "a land flowing with milk and honey."

Moses found out why the bush was not burnt, although it was on fire. It was because God was in the bush, and wanted to talk to Moses. To see a bush burning, which no human hand had set on

fire; to see it keep on burning, although no fuel was added to it; this was a picture to Moses of what God could do with him. As God was in the little bush by the wayside and kept it burning, so would God be in Moses and set him on fire to do His work, so will He be in every one of us until we burn with a desire to do His will.

The poet has sung:

> "Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God;
> But only he who sees, takes off his shoes."

Do you know that life is full of burning bushes in which God wants to talk to us and tell us what to do? He had a great work for Moses to do, and so He has something for you and me to do.

As you go to school and study your lessons, you will see these burning bushes. Some day your heart will burn within you as you see a truth which you did not see before, as you understand a lesson better than you ever did before, and you will have a new interest in your lessons, and a new desire to prepare yourself for usefulness in life. You have seen a burning bush, and God is talking to you out of it.

Our text is the picture of a great school. God Himself is the great teacher. Moses is the scholar. The sight Moses sees arouses his interest and attention. God teaches Moses a great lesson, prepares him for his life-work, and for the next forty years Moses does the work of God and the will of God.

Your school days may seem dull to you, you may tire of your lessons, but if you cultivate the interest

and attention and awe and obedience which Moses had, you will find the ordinary bushes aflame with fire, and you will learn the lessons which will be helpful to you in the forty years, or more, of service to which God is calling you.

It is the great work of a teacher in the public school and in the Sunday school to make a common bush burn with fire so that God may speak out of it to the soul of the pupil. It is easy to teach in such a way that every bush remains but an ordinary bush, but the real teacher is the one who is able to make the bush "afire with God" for you, and God will tell you what He wants you to do.

Many a boy and girl has been helped by the mother, the father, the teacher, the minister, or some one else, to see the burning bush out of which God spoke, and so they saw a vision of their life-work, and heard the message from God which made them good and noble and useful.

As we read the life-stories of great men and women we find that at some time in their childhood or their youth they met their burning bush in the form of an experience or an influence that helped to make them what they became.

When Abraham Lincoln was only a little over nine years old his mother passed away. She called her children to her bedside, and laying her hand on the boy's head, she said: "I am going to leave you, Abe,—and, oh, how hard it is to part with you. I know that you will be a good boy; that you will be kind to Sarah and to your father. I want you to live as I have taught you, and to love your Heav-

enly Father. I am thankful God gave you to us. Love everybody, hinder nobody, never lie, never drink, and the world will be glad some day that you were born."

After he became a man, he said: "All that I am, all that I hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

Surely, his mother was the one who made him see the burning bush out of which God spoke to him, and God gave him his life-work as surely as He did to Moses. It was a great task to deliver the Children of Israel out of the bondage of Egyptian slavery, but with the help of God Moses was able to do it. It was also a great task to free the colored slaves of our country, but, with the help of God, Abraham Lincoln did it.

The same God is able to help you and me do our tasks in life, no matter how hard they may be.

If you have not yet seen your burning bush, look for it, and when you see it, take off your shoes from your feet, and come to God in a humble spirit, and He will speak to you and will tell you what He wants you to do.

XLII.

THE WONDERFUL DIPPER

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."—MATT. 10:42.

IT may seem a small thing to give a cup of cold water to a little child, and yet our Saviour says that if it is done in the right spirit, it will bring a reward. There may be life in a cup of cold water, if given to one who is burning up with a fever, or to a traveler in the desert who would die without it, or to the wounded soldier on the battlefield, or even to the sick little child with its parched lips.

It is said that during one of the battles of the Civil War, while the two armies moved back and forth against each other, there was a little patch of ground between them, which was held now by the one side and now by the other. It was covered with bodies of the dead and the dying, and all through the afternoon the cry was heard, "Water! water!" One of the soldiers asked his captain to be allowed to answer those piteous cries, but the captain answered, "No; it would be certain death." But the soldier could hardly bear to hear those cries, which he heard above the roar of artillery and the crack of the muskets. Again and again he pleaded with the captain to be allowed to go. At last he set out

with a bucket of water and a tin cup. For a while the bullets sang around him, but his life was spared as he went on his errand of mercy. When the soldiers in blue saw what he wanted to do they stopped firing, and for an hour and a half the soldier in gray went about on his errand of mercy. Surely, he received his reward!

The spirit in which the act is done is what gives it value, whether it be a small act, like giving a cup of cold water to a child, or some act that is thought to be greater. St. Matthew reports Jesus as saying, "In the name of a disciple," while St. Mark gives the text in this form: "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." By "these little ones" Jesus may have meant His disciples, or He may have had in mind little children, one of whom He had just taken up in His arms as St. Mark tells the story. We may say that a cup of cold water given to any one who belongs to Christ, if given in the right spirit, shall not lose its reward.

Where the spirit of Christ is, wonderful things may be done. Some years ago three children—a boy of ten, a girl of seven, and a girl of four—went alone from a town in Germany to a town in Missouri, in our own country. The father and mother had come to America to seek their fortune, leaving the children in the care of an aunt in Germany. Afterward they sent money to the aunt, and asked her to send them to America. She was a good Christian woman, and she gave the older girl a New Tes-

tament, asking her to show it to every person to whom she had to appeal for guidance. On the first leaf of the New Testament she had written the names of the three children, and the fact that their father and mother were looking for them in Sedalia, Missouri. And below this she wrote the words of our text, "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." The children could not speak a word of any language but German, but they made the trip of more than four thousand miles, over sea and land, in perfect safety, and reached their parents in their new home.

I want to tell you a beautiful story, which gave me the subject of this sermon. A little girl and her mother lived all alone in a little house in the woods. They were very happy and contented, but one day the mother became very sick, and the little girl was very sad. The mother said, as she lay there suffering from weakness and from thirst, "I must have a drink of clear, cold water." The night was dark, and the spring was far away, and they had no one to send for the water. The little girl took her tin dipper and started out alone through the woods to fetch her mother a drink. She ran on and on, and when she reached the spring she was very tired; but she filled her tin dipper and started home. As she went on through the dark, all at once she felt a warm touch upon her hand, and she stopped. It was a little dog who was nearly dying of thirst, and he touched her hand with his hot tongue. There

was not much water in the dipper, for she had spilled some of it as she went along, but she poured a little of it into her hand and let him drink it. Then a wonderful thing happened,—the tin dipper was changed into a silver one, with more water in it than before.

She started on again, hurrying very fast, for she was anxious to give her mother the water which she so much needed. But she had not gone very far when she met a stranger in the road, who reached out his hand, and begged for a drink of the clear, cold water. Her mother had told her that she should always be kind to a stranger, so she held the dipper up to his lips that he might drink. But as the stranger drank, the silver dipper was changed into a golden dipper, full to the brim with sparkling water!

The little girl hurried on, but the road was so long and she was so tired, that it seemed as if she would never reach home. She was weak and faint and very thirsty, and she longed to drink just a few drops of the water, but she denied herself for her mother's sake. At last she reached home, and as soon as her mother drank the water she became well and strong again, and as the golden dipper touched her lips it was changed to a diamond dipper. And the diamond dipper left her fingers to shine up in the sky, and there in the northern sky it shines every night to tell all little children how once a child was brave and unselfish and kind.

XLIII.

HALLOWE'EN

"To all the saints in Christ Jesus."—PHIL. 1:1.

THE first of November is known as All Saints' Day. Long ago it was called Allhallows Day, and sometimes Hallowmass. The Roman Catholic Church celebrates the second day of November as All Souls' Day.

In France, where this day is called Day of the Dead, they have a beautiful custom somewhat like our Memorial Day. For several weeks before the day arrives the shop windows are full of beautiful wreaths made of small straw flowers, called "everlasting flowers," some in their natural color, and some dyed blue, pink, or purple. These wreaths are bought by the people and taken to the cemeteries on All Saints' Day and placed on the graves of their friends and loved ones, and even on the graves of the poor and unknown who have no friends to attend to this matter, and on All Souls' Day the cemeteries look very beautiful, as they do in our country on Memorial Day.

The children also take small wreaths and lay them upon the grave of a little brother, or sister, or friend. Our own poet, Henry W. Longfellow, has written in one of his poems:

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there;
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair."

Other Roman Catholic countries also celebrate All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, but in our country these days do not receive much attention, except by some Churches.

The way All Saints' Day came into the Church calendar is interesting. Hundreds of years ago, the leaders of the Christian Church named each of the days of the year after a saint. This went on until the time of Pope Boniface IV, who was pope from 608 to 615 A.D. He found that the days were all taken up by the many saints, but that there were many more saints left. He, therefore, selected November first and called it All Saints' Day in honor of all the saints who were not named on special days.

This Pope also received from the Roman emperor a temple which had been called the Pantheon. This temple was finished twenty-seven years before Jesus was born. It was large and beautiful, and was called the Pantheon in honor of all the gods who were worshiped by these heathen people. It is hardly necessary to tell you that as soon as Pope Boniface IV received this temple from the emperor he changed it into a Christian Church, and dedicated it to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and to all the saints and martyrs. It was in this Church that All Saints' Day had its beginning.

But what has all this to do with Hallowe'en? A great deal, as you shall see. Hallowe'en, or Allhallows Eve, as it was sometimes called, is the evening before All Saints' Day, as Christmas Eve is the evening before Christmas Day.

You may wonder why Hallowe'en, which means "holy evening," should be celebrated in such an unholy way, with noise and masks and all kinds of costumes.

At first it was a heathen festival, and it was celebrated by the lighting of bonfires on the hilltops to keep off evil spirits, which were supposed to be wandering about that night. Hallowe'en was the one night of all nights in the year when ghosts and witches and fairies, all spirits, good and bad, were thought to be on the earth and to visit the homes of the people and to play tricks and to have a good time.

At first when Hallowe'en became a Christian festival, some of the Christians celebrated it in a Christian way by holding religious services, but some of the people celebrated it in a pagan way, and now, hundreds of years afterward, we still have the Christian name and the pagan celebration. Persons dress in all kinds of costumes, representing good and evil spirits, fairies and witches, animals and devils, and, in some sections, tricks are played upon persons who are disliked.

There are many games that may be played at Hallowe'en parties, among which are cracking nuts, bobbing for apples, eating doughnuts, hunting coins hidden in a pan of flour, and so on.

Instead of bobbing for apples, or diving for apples afloat in a tub of water, which often gets the clothes and the carpet wet, a good game may be played by stretching a stout string or line across the room, to which apples are hung tied to small

strings, and then the boys and girls see which one can get the first bite out of the swinging fruit, without using the hands; or the game may be prolonged to see which one of the party can first eat a whole apple in this way.

Sometimes Hallowe'en tricks may result in harm or injury, as is seen from the following story: "One Hallowe'en a boy rang a drugstore bell. The clerk came down and opened the door. All he saw was a pumpkin with holes for eyes, nose, mouth and ears, through which a candle was shining. The boys had a good laugh and meant no harm. They were not bad, only wanted some fun. The clerk was mad and thought the boys were bad. When the boy who rang the bell went home he saw the doctor's horse at the gate. He ran in and found baby sister very sick. The doctor said, 'Peter, run as fast as you can and get this medicine.' He rang and rang the bell, but the clerk did not come down. The next morning there was crape on the door of the baby's home."

XLIV.

THE GOLDEN RULE

"All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets."—MATT. 7:12.

WHEN I was a boy we were taught the Golden Rule in this short form: "Do to others as you would that they should do to you." But it is one thing to *know* the Golden Rule and another thing to *do* it. If all the men and women and children in the world would live by this rule we should have heaven on the earth.

More than five hundred years before Christ was born, a heathen teacher had said: "What you do not like when done to yourself do not do to others." But this is not the Golden Rule. This means that if you see a man in the gutter you must not step on his neck, because you would not like him to step on your neck if you were lying in the gutter. But the Golden Rule means that you should lift him up out of the gutter and bind up his wounds, because that is what you would want him to do for you if you were hurt and lying in the gutter.

The great trouble with the world is that too many persons are living according to a rule something like this: Do to the other fellow what he wants to do to you, but do it first. This is the rule of selfish-

ness, while the Golden Rule is the rule of love. In another place (Matthew 22:39), Jesus put it in this form: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The Golden Rule is to be the rule of life not only for men and women, but also for boys and girls. You are to live according to this rule every day, and by and by it will be as natural for you to do what this rule requires as it is to eat and sleep and play.

There are many rules which we have to keep in life, no matter where we go or what we try to do. If you go down the street and meet people, the rule is to turn to the right as you pass them. When you get to the crossing a policeman will tell you to pass over or to stop until the automobiles are gone. If you want to enter a large department store, you will see on one door the word "In" and on another the word "Out." If you attend school, you will find that there are a number of rules that you must observe. Even when you play, every game has its rules.

One day a boy came home from school and he said to his mother: "Mother, the teacher read out such a lot of rules we have to keep, I am sure I shall never remember them all."

Did you ever think of the fact that most of the laws and rules that have to be made are caused by the people who do not want to do right? If all the people did what was right very few laws would be necessary. But in the Golden Rule Jesus gives us a simple direction by which we can be pretty sure to do

the right thing if we want to. The simplest things, however, are not always the easiest.

The place where you must begin to practice the Golden Rule is in the home, and you will find that this is in some respects the hardest place to do it. There is so much selfishness in some homes that the practice of the Golden Rule will change the whole life of the family and will bring much greater happiness.

If your father or your mother want you to do something for them when you want to play, do not say that you would rather not do it, but think of the Golden Rule, and do what you would like them to do for you if you were the father or mother and they were the boy or girl.

Make it your rule to do to your brother or sister what you would like them to do to you if you were in their place and they in yours. By doing this regularly you will soon make a change in your home, and you will find that you will not only make the others much happier, but you will be a great deal happier yourself. Where the Golden Rule is practiced there is no strife, no quarreling, no hatred, no envy, but peace and harmony and happiness will prevail.

If you practice the Golden Rule in the school, you will soon find a change in the teacher and the other pupils. If you treat the teacher as you would like to be treated if you were in her place, you will be on much better terms with her and will get a great deal more out of your lessons. If your treatment of the other scholars, whether in the school

room or on the playground, will be according to the Golden Rule you will find that you will soon be a leader among them and they will catch your spirit and will do to you as they want you to do to them and as you have been trying to do to them.

Even in the Sunday school this rule is not kept as it ought to be, and a great change can be brought about in the class and in the whole Sunday school if teachers and scholars will live according to the Golden Rule, and surely there if anywhere should this rule of the Master be kept.

If men were to live according to the Golden Rule in business, in labor, in politics, in religion, in everything, this old world would soon be turned into a paradise, and dishonesty, graft, strikes, hypocrisy, and warfare would cease, and the will of God would be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Which of you, my juniors, will be the first to practice the Golden Rule? After you have tried it a year, let me know how it works.

When the great general, Napoleon, with his companions, was climbing the steep defile of St. Helena they met a peasant boy with a load of fagots on his head. One of the officers motioned to the boy to step aside. Napoleon scolded the officer and said: "Respect the burden! Respect the burden!" Napoleon had been himself a peasant boy, and he wished to do to a burden-bearer that which he had asked others to do for him when as a child he carried his bundle of fagots down the mountain-side.

XLV.

REVELATION TO CHILDREN

"At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes."—MATT. 11:25.

OVER the door to a classroom in a university town of Europe is a motto in Latin words which means, "God shows Himself to be greatest in the things that are least."

Jesus was fond of telling us how God loved the little things, such as the lilies of the field, the birds of the air, and the little children. Jesus Himself called to Him a little child and set him in the midst of His disciples and said unto them, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

In our text Jesus speaks of the revelation which God makes to children, and even unto babes, a revelation which He hides from the wise and understanding. The word "reveal" means "to uncover," or "to make known," and Jesus means to say that God makes known to children some things which grown up people cannot understand, even some that are wise and learned.

When the world was looking for the coming of Christ, they looked for Him among the great things

of earth. They thought He would come with the power and the show of an earthly king. But when He came, it was in the form of a little child,—a baby poor and weak, born in a stable and laid in a manger.

Just now there are a great many persons who look for the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, and they look in vain. If they want to see Him coming they must look into the faces of the little children that are born into the world, for in them they shall see more of Christ than the clouds will ever reveal, and it is in these children that the future destiny of His Kingdom upon earth lies.

Little children know more and understand more than many people think. God reveals to them things which He hides from older ones, just because these little ones are so simple, so trustful and so affectionate.

A great English earl once went with a pious friend to hear a noted preacher. The sermon was about the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers. As they were coming out of the Church, the great statesman said to his friend that he could not understand it all, and asked him if he thought that anyone in the Church could. "Why yes," said he, "there were many plain unlettered women, and some children there, who understood every word of it, and heard it with joy."

While children are natural—that is, before they are spoiled by a certain kind of training—they are more ready to receive the revelation God wants to give them than afterward. After they grow up, they

think they ought to grow very wise and be slow to believe and quick to question, and therefore God cannot make known to them all that He would like them to know and to believe. God can reveal to humble souls that which is hidden from those who are too clever.

That is why the scribes and the Pharisees could not understand Jesus, and why the common people heard Him gladly. The scribes and the Pharisees thought they knew more than Jesus did, and He revealed His greatest truths to the simple people and to the children. "To such belongeth the kingdom of heaven."

There was once a little Scotch girl who had come to this country, but had been raised in the Church in her home-land. The village in which she lived was on fire with a great revival that was going on at the time. A special preacher had come to conduct the revival services, and he was stopping at the house where the little Scotch girl sewed. One afternoon he met her in the yard, and seeing her at work he asked her, "Mary, have you found Jesus?" Her eyes opened wide, her armful of kindling wood dropped to the ground, her lips parted in great surprise as she quickly said, in her broad Scotch way, "Why, I dinna ken that I had lost Him." ("Why, I didn't know that I had lost Him.")

I read of a little girl who lived with her grandparents. Some one said of her: "She is a good child, learns well, prays well, and obeys well." Her grandfather said she taught him solemn lessons. She never went to bed without first kneeling down and praying. One evening she went to bed very late.

The family thought she might neglect her prayers on account of the lateness of the hour and because she was so tired. But she said: "We must pray before we go to sleep." At her request they all knelt down, and she prayed the prayers taught her. The old grandfather followed her in another evening prayer. Afterward he said, with tears in his eyes, "This child has taught us a solemn lesson." And so has many a good child taught its parents and teachers.

Dr. Henry Harbaugh, one of our Church Fathers, wrote a very beautiful poem in memory of his mother, more than sixty years ago. I will quote two verses of the poem as a fitting close to this sermon:

"Think not that I forget, mother,
When I was very wee,
I looked into your eyes, mother,
While sitting on your knee;
And holding fast your ear and hair,
I would not let you rise;
And you were glad to be detained—
My whim you did surmise!
Myself to view,
And babble to
The baby in your eyes.

* * * * * * * * * *

"You've read to me the words, mother,
Of Him, the meek and mild,
How he who enters heaven, mother,
Must first become a child!
O! when the power of that bright world
My childhood glorifies,
I'll know you there, as I do here,
My mother in the skies!
Then shall I see
Eternally,
An angel in your eyes."

XLVI.

A LOVE LETTER TO CHILDREN

"My children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth."—I JOHN 3:18.

LETTER-WRITING is a wonderful thing. How proud you were when you wrote your first letter. How happy you ought to be that you can write letters. How faithful you ought to be in writing letters to your friends. Our text is taken from what we may call "a love letter to children." It was written by John, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, who is often called "the apostle of love." He laid his head on Jesus' breast when they reclined at their meals. He seems to have caught more of the spirit of Jesus than any one else, and that is the spirit of love.

In his gospel John calls himself three times "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and we all know that he loved Jesus. Besides his gospel, John wrote three letters, which are called "epistles," and the book of Revelation. It is the first of his three epistles that I call "a love letter to children," and if you will read it through, I think you will say that I gave it the right name. Just before I began to write this sermon I read this epistle through twice so that I might be sure to know what I was talking about. In this letter of five chapters and one hundred and five verses, John uses the word "love" fifty-two times,

which is about half as often as there are verses in the whole letter. We may therefore say that it is "a love-letter." He writes many beautiful things about love, and the most beautiful of all is that "God is love." John tells us twice that "God is love," and every boy and girl ought to know where this saying is found. If I tell you the verses are I John 4:8 and 16, you may remember them, or you may not; but if I give you the key which some one has worked out, it may help you to remember better. He says: "Can you remember where to find that text? Very easy. Comes *twice* in John's *first* Epistle, both times in *fourth* chapter, once in *eighth,* and once in *sixteenth* verse. Can't forget it if you know your *two* tables.

"Twice one is two, twice two is four, twice four is eight, twice eight is sixteen."

In the five chapters of this love letter John writes nine times: "My little children." He uses the word "Beloved" a number of times, and also "brethren," but "my little children," is used oftener than any other expression. It is for this reason that I call this epistle "a love letter to children." John was a very loving man, and sometimes when he says, "My little children," he may mean men and women as well as children. But I am sure he meant real children in some of his sayings. In the second chapter he says, "I write unto you, fathers," and "I write unto you, young men," and I believe he means what he says. Therefore, when he says "I write unto you, my little children," I believe he means what he says. I wish I could take up all of the nine verses in which

he says "my little children," and tell you what he means in each case, but that would make too long a sermon; therefore I must be satisfied to speak of the verse I have taken for our text: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth."

Love best shows itself in *living* and in *giving,* far more than in talking. It is easy to say, "I love you," but the words are not enough. Love must be proven by actions and by life. It is easy to say "God is love," or "God loves the world;" but when one can say, as Jesus did: "For God so loved the world that *He gave His only begotten Son,*" then we know that God really loves the world because He made the greatest sacrifice for it. Because Jesus laid down His life for us we know that He really loves us.

There comes to us a true story from Scotland about a boy, thirteen years old, who was a real hero and had the right kind of love in his heart. He and six companions were out in a boat, and it was upset some distance from the shore. This boy was the only one of the seven who could swim. While the other boys clung to the bottom of the boat he swam back and forth between the boat and the shore, taking one with him each time, till he saved five in this way. He was then very tired and almost played out, but there was one still left holding on to the boat, so he plunged in again to try to save him. But he was so much exhausted that he sank before he could get to him. The sixth one was saved by some men who happened to come by, so that the

little hero was the only one drowned. This boy might have said to the other boys, "I love you," or "I am sorry for you," and then swam ashore and saved himself, but he showed that he loved in deed and in truth, and proved what Jesus said: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

How much do you love your mother? How do you prove your love for her? I came across a poem which is a sermon in itself, and I want to give it to you, in the hope that you will learn its lesson:

"I love you, mother," said little John;
But, forgetting his work, his cap went on,
And off he ran to the garden swing,
And left her the water and wood to bring.

"I love you, mother," said rosy Nell,
"I love you more than tongue can tell;"
Then she teased and pouted full half a day,
Till mother was glad when she went to play.

"I love you, mother," said little Fan;
"Today I will help you all I can;
How glad I am that school don't keep;"
So she rocked the babe till it fell asleep.

Then, stepping softly, she brought the broom,
And swept the floor and tidied the room;
Busy and happy all day was she,
Busy and happy as child could be.

"I love you, mother," again they said,
Three little children going to bed;
How do you think that mother guessed
Which of the children loved her best?

XLVII.

A THANKSGIVING SANDWICH

"In everything give thanks."—I THESS. 5:18.

IN three little verses in his first letter to the Thessalonians, St. Paul gives us what may be called a Thanksgiving Sandwich. You know a sandwich is made up of three pieces: bread on one side, bread on the other side, and meat in the middle.

On one side St. Paul puts verse sixteen, "Rejoice always;" on the other side he puts verse eighteen, "In everything give thanks;" and in the middle he puts verse seventeen, "Pray without ceasing." And then he gives the reason for it: "For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to youward."

On one side of our sandwich is *joy;* on the other side is *thanksgiving;* and in the middle is *prayer.* And this is right, because *thanksgiving is a joyful prayer.* The bread in our Thanksgiving sandwich is joy and thanksgiving, and the meat is prayer.

Joy is something we have in ourselves; thanksgiving is something we give to others; and prayer is something we offer to God.

If we want to do as St. Paul says, "Rejoice always," we must cultivate the joyful habit.

A little girl was once tearing her doll to pieces. Her mother asked her what she was doing, and she answered: "Papa says there is a grain of comfort in everything, and I am looking for it." She

had the right idea, but was making a wrong use of it.

I think the old lady of whom I read had a better way of finding comfort and joy in everything. She had a great many troubles and worries, but her face was so sweet and happy that everybody liked to look at it. One day a fretful woman came to her and asked how it was she always seemed so happy. She told her fretful friend that the secret of her happiness was that she kept a Pleasure Book. Every evening for years and years she had written down in this book something nice that happened to her that day. And there wasn't a day that she didn't find something to write in the book. She had formed the joyful habit, she had found a grain of comfort in everything, and she was able to "rejoice always."

If you, boys and girls, want to get the most joy out of life, you must start early to form the joyful habit. The more you grumble and complain about things, the more you will find to grumble and complain about; the more you look for the grain of comfort in everything and reasons for joy and thankfulness, the more you will find to rejoice about and to be thankful for.

The way the corners of your mouth are turned has a great deal to do with the joy of life. If you feel like grumbling, pouting or frowning, just glance into the mirror and you will find the corners of your mouth turned down. But if you feel cheerful and happy and are counting your blessings, just

glance into the mirror and you will find the corners of your mouth turned up.

Thanksgiving also is a habit that must be cultivated. St. Paul says: "In everything give thanks." If ever there was a man who had reason to complain and to feel blue, it was St. Paul. He had much suffering and many troubles in life. He wrote some of his most beautiful letters while in prison. He writes more than forty times in his letters about giving thanks. He had learned to give thanks in everything, and he always found something to be thankful for.

Two of the things which most parents teach their children to say, as soon as they learn to talk are, "Please" and "Thank you." But it is not enough to say "Thank you" with the lips; it must come from the heart.

It pays to be polite. Some years ago a lady was coming out of a building when the heavy door swung back so that she could not get out. A boy from the street sprang forward and held the door open for her, and as she passed out she smiled on him and said, "Thank you." "Did you hear that?" said the boy to a small companion. "Hear what?" he asked. "She said 'Thank you' to the likes o' me." The lady was much amused. "Why, it always pays to be polite," she said, and thought no more about it. Some years later the same lady was doing her Christmas shopping, when she was treated very kindly by one of the floor-walkers in the store. She thanked him for his courtesy, when he said: "Pardon me, madam, but you gave me my first lesson in

politeness." He explained to her that he was the boy who had held open the door for her years before and that her courteous "Thank you" had given him the ambition to do something in the world. The very next day he had gone and offered himself as messenger boy in the very store in which he now held a position of trust, which his politeness had helped him to win.

We are to be thankful to others when they do us a kindness or favor, but especially to God, Who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. We are to give thanks in everything, because God is able to make all things work together for our good.

But the most important part of our message is, "Pray without ceasing." This does not mean that we must always be saying prayers, but that we should at all times have a prayerful spirit.

There are times when we should talk to God as to our dearest Friend, but whenever we feel the nearness of God and put our trust in Him we are in a prayerful spirit.

Every boy and girl ought to learn some little prayers to say at the table and when they go to bed, but every boy and girl ought early to learn to talk to God for themselves as they talk to their own mothers. Prayer is the key with which to open the door of every day in the morning and to lock it at night.

Joy and thanksgiving and prayer belong together. They are all necessary to make a Thanksgiving sandwich. Let us be sure that we not only ask things of God in prayer, but that we also thank Him joyfully for all His blessings.

There is a legend which tells us that two angels were sent down from heaven with two large baskets. The one angel was to gather into his basket the desires of men to bring them back to God, while the other angel was to gather into his basket all their thanksgivings. It is said that the first angel soon had his basket full to overflowing, while the basket of the second angel was almost empty. "In everything give thanks."

I hope you will all enjoy many good things on Thanksgiving Day, but I hope you will have Thanksgiving sandwich every day.

XLVIII.

PAINTING YOUR BEST PICTURE

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." (A. V.)—PROV. 25:11.

TWO months ago, when I gave you a sermon on "Hidden Pictures," I told you that the word "pictures," while found three times in the Authorized Version of the Bible, is translated differently in each case in the American Revised Version, from which I always like to take my texts. At that time I used the text in Numbers 33:52, where God said to the children of Israel, "And destroy all their pictures;" but which is translated in the A. R. V., "And destroy all their figured stones." Another text is in Isaiah 2:16, where the A. V. reads "all pleasant pictures;" but the A. R. V. has "all pleasant imagery."

But the most interesting of the three texts, and I think the most beautiful, also, is the one I have selected for our sermon today: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." This text is translated in the A. R. V. in the form of poetry, as follows:

> "A word fitly spoken
> Is like apples of gold in network of silver."

A great Hebrew scholar, whom I heard lecture at a summer school a number of years ago, thinks the best way to translate it is like this:

"Like graved work of gold and carved work
of silver
Is a word fitly spoken."

But "graved work" is a kind of picture only that the artist uses a chisel or a sharp instrument instead of a brush.

You remember the great painter about whom I told you in another sermon. One day a friend of his asked him which of all his paintings he thought his best. The painter took him to the other end of the room and showed him a large piece of white canvas stretched in a beautiful frame, and said: "That is my best work."

Every boy and girl is an artist, and your best picture is not yet painted. Your life is much like a white canvas upon which you will paint the picture that is to be. Life's best is before you and some day you will finish your best picture. One of our American poets has written:

"Life is a sheet of paper white,
Whereon each one of us may write
His word or two, and then comes night;
Though thou have time
But for a line—be that sublime;
Not failure, but low aim is crime."

That you may be able to paint your best picture I must tell you a story which was printed some years ago in "Zion's Herald," but I will tell it in my own way.

A man who had traveled a great deal was visiting in the home of his sister. One day he found two of his nieces painting flowers. He looked at their pictures a moment and then he asked them, "How

would you like to paint bottles as the Chinese paint them?" The girls both shouted, "Do tell us about the bottles." Their uncle told them to wait until he went up to his trunk, and when he came down he held in his hand a little bottle about three inches long, beautifully painted. As the girls examined the bottle, one of them exclaimed, "And what a lot of painting to go on such a little bottle."

"In the bottle," corrected their uncle. "That was all painted on the inside of the bottle, and I saw the artist doing it myself." Then he went on to explain how it was done. There is only one place in the world where they do this, a certain town in China. The artists are in a room that has no side windows, but is lighted by glass overhead. They lie on their backs, on a mass of green branches, and hold these little bottles up toward the light. The neck of the bottle is very narrow and the opening very small, but with a tiny brush, which is slightly curved at the end, the artist manages to paint the bottle on the inside.

From this story you may learn how to paint your best picture. It must be painted on the inside. Your face will show the kind of picture you are painting. If the picture is beautiful, the face will be beautiful; if the picture is not beautiful, the face will be ugly. In the last verse of the sixth chapter of the Acts you read about Stephen: "And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Stephen had painted a beautiful picture on his soul, and his face was beautiful. Like the Chinese bottle-

painters, you must lie on your back (humble yourself before God) hold yourself up toward the light that shines from Christ, and with a brush made of your thoughts, your words, and your actions, you must paint your picture on the inside, and the finished picture will be your character, which will shine out in your face and in your conduct. After all, the writer of the book of Proverbs is right, "A word fitly spoken" is like a picture. Back of the word is the thought; ahead of the word is the deed; and all these taken together reveal your character, the kind of picture you are painting.

Some time ago, when thinking about our text, I sat down and wrote this little poem:

The wise man centuries ago
Wrote proverbs every one should know;
Like father to a son speaks he
In tender words to you and me.

And as we write upon our hearts
The words of wisdom he imparts,
They are translated into life
And character, with virtues rife.

Words fitly spoken, well prepared,
To golden apples are compared,
That are in silver network shrined,
And influence the heart and mind.

It is such words that we would speak,
Such golden apples we would seek
In silver network so to frame,
That they may grace the halls of fame.

But, like the wise man long ago,
We need the Spirit's help, to know
What words to speak, what songs to sing,
That blessings to the world may bring.

XLIX.

THE BLESSING OF FRIENDSHIP

"The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."—I SAM. 18:1.

TRUE friendship is one of the greatest blessings of life. It is the power which binds hearts together. Even children have their friendships. One of the best friends any boy or girl can have is mother. Of course, the best Friend in all the world is Christ, who is "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." One of the most beautiful stories in the Old Testament is the story of the friendship between David and Jonathan. By studying this story we can understand the workings of friendship better.

Friendship may be said to be like a rainbow, which is the bridge that binds heaven and earth together. As the rainbow has its seven colors,—violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red,—so friendship has its seven elements, all of which may be seen in the friendship of David and Jonathan.

The first element of friendship is *love*. There can be no real friendship without love. Jonathan was a true friend to David because, as we read in our text, "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." A friend will, if necessary, risk his own life for one

he loves. Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

A boy and a girl were playing together in a certain town, when the cry was heard, "A mad dog! a mad dog!" The boy saw the dog coming directly towards him; but instead of running away, he took off his coat, and wrapping it round his arm, boldly faced the dog, holding out his arm covered with the coat. The dog flew at his arm, worrying over it, and trying to bite through it, till men came up and killed him. One of the men asked the boy, "Why didn't you run away from the dog, my little man?" He answered, "I could easily have done that, but if I had, the dog would have bit my sister." He was a loving friend and brother.

Another element of friendship is *unselfishness*. Nothing will kill friendship as quickly as selfishness. Jonathan was a friend to David even though he knew it would cost him his kingdom. "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." At the risk of his own life Jonathan tried to soften the jealousy of Saul, his father, toward David.

One time the great English painter, Turner, was on a committee to arrange the hanging of pictures which were to be exhibited in London. At the last moment, when all the walls were full, a picture by an unknown girl came in. Turner said, "This is a good picture. It must be hung." But the other members of the committee replied, "That is impos-

sible. There is no room for it." Very quietly Turner said, "I will arrange it." And he took down one of his own pictures and hung the new one in its place.

A third element of friendship is *kindness*. King Saul spoke to Jonathan, his son, and to all his servants that they should slay David. And Jonathan spake well of David unto Saul his father, and told him that he should not sin against David because David had not sinned against him, but had done a great work for Israel when he took his own life in his hand and slew the mighty giant Goliath. In this way Jonathan turned the anger of Saul away from David for a time.

Another element of friendship is *sincerity*. You can have true friendship only between true persons. Both David and Jonathan were noble in character and sincere in their friendship. There can be no lasting friendship between bad men.

A fifth element of friendship is *faithfulness*. Jonathan was David's friend when he needed a friend most, when he was in trouble and distress. When Jonathan found that his father was determined to put David to death, he helped him to escape and saved his life.

During one of our Indian wars, Colonel Byrd, of Virginia, fell into the hands of the Cherokee Indians. He was condemned to death, and was led out to execution. One of the chiefs in that tribe had been the colonel's friend. As the warriors came forth to put the colonel to death, this chief came and stood before him and said, "This man is my

friend. Before you can get at him, you must kill me." He saved his life, and proved that he was a faithful friend indeed.

Another element of friendship is *sacredness*. David and Jonathan made a covenant in the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel. Their friendship was sacred.

The last element of friendship to which I will refer is *permanence*. True friendship is not changed by wealth, separation or death. Saul and his sons were slain by the Philistines. David grieved for his dear friend Jonathan. He sang a dirge over Saul and Jonathan called, "The Song of the Bow," in which he says:

"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan;
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me;
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women."

After David became king of Israel and Judah, he asked, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" He found that there was a son of Jonathan living, who was lame in both feet. David commanded that a large tract of land should be set apart for this cripple, whose name was Mephibosheth, and that he should eat at the king's table all the remainder of his life, as he said, "I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake."

"Remember well, and bear in mind,
A faithful friend is hard to find.
And if you find one kind and true,
Change not the old one for the new."

L.

FOLLOWING THE STAR

"We saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him."—MATT. 2:2.

ONE of our poets once said, "Hitch your wagon to a star." That is what the Wise Men did, but their wagons were camels, upon which they came from a far country, following the star which led them on and on until they came to Jerusalem.

We do not know as much about these Wise Men as we would like to know. In the margin of the American Revised Version they are called "Magi." We will use that name, because it is shorter, and we will not forget that it means the same as the Wise Men.

These Magi were men who studied the stars. They had high towers into which they went that they might see the stars more clearly and might study them better.

They had heard from some of the Jews who were living in their country about the great Messiah who was to come and conquer all the world. They watched the heavens to see whether they could find any sign of some great event that was going to take place. One night they saw a bright new star shining in the sky in the direction of Judaea, and they thought this must be the sign that the great King was born.

They hitched their camels to the star, and started out on their great journey. No doubt there was great excitement as they left their homes, taking with them food and water and other things necessary for the journey, and also carrying with them gifts suitable for the great King.

They traveled mostly by night when the stars were shining, and when they could follow their own particular star. On and on they went, following the star, until the city of Jerusalem lay before them, and their hearts rejoiced at the thought of soon seeing the new-born King. They naturally thought that they would find Him in Jerusalem, the capital of the country.

As they entered one of the gates of the city they asked one after another, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him." They were somewhat puzzled to find that the people did not seem to understand what they were talking about, because they expected everybody to know about the King that was born.

At last the news reached Herod in his palace, and he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. He was about seventy years old, and very jealous at the thought that he might lose his place as king. He quickly gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Christ should be born. And they told him that the prophets said he would be born in Bethlehem of Judaea

Herod called the Magi to himself privately, and

sent them to Bethlehem, a village about six miles south of Jerusalem, where it was said his birth was to take place. Before they left him, Herod said to the Magi, "Go and search out exactly concerning the young Child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him." You all know that he was a sly, old rascal, and that his real object was to find the baby King and put him to death.

When they came out of the city they saw their star again, and followed it until it led them to the right place. "And they came into the house and saw the young Child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshiped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh."

They were warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, and they went back to their own country another way.

Are there stars for us to follow? There surely are, though they may not appear suddenly in the heavens as did the star of the Magi. Every boy and girl has his or her ideals, which are high and noble aims in life, and which must be followed faithfully.

The Bible is such a star for every one. It was a star to the psalmist, who said:

> "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
> And a light unto my path."

He had only the Old Testament, where the promises of the coming Messiah are found. We have the New Testament also, where the fulfillment of those

promises is given, and where we learn about the coming of the King and the wonderful life He lived, and the wonderful work He did. In the Bible you can find out all you want to know about Jesus and about the way to heaven.

The Magi saw the holy Jesus as a little Child, and worshiped Him. We know Him as our Saviour, and know what He has done for us.

The story comes to us from Russia that an old woman, the Baboushka, was at work in her house when the Wise Men from the East passed on their way to find the Christ-Child. "Come with us," they said, "we have seen His star in the east, and go to worship Him." "I will come, but not now," she answered; "I have my house to set in order; when this is done, I will follow and find Him." But when her work was done the three kings had passed on their way across the desert, and the star shone no more in the darkened heavens. She never saw the Christ-Child, but she is living and searching for Him still. For His sake she takes care of all His children. It is she who in Russian and Italian houses is believed to fill the stockings and dress the tree on Christmas morn. The children are awakened by the cry of "Behold the Baboushka!" and spring up, hoping to see her before she vanishes out of the window. She thinks, so they say, that in each poor little one whom she warms and feeds she may find the Christ-Child, whom she neglected ages ago, but is doomed to eternal disappointment.

LI.

MAKING ROOM FOR JESUS

"There was no room for them in the inn."—LUKE 2:7.

WHEN we think of the fact that there was no room in the inn for Jesus to be born, and that He had to be born in a stable and cradled in a manger, this text becomes one of the saddest in the Bible.

There is danger in our day, when we are so busy about many things, of crowding Jesus out of our lives. If we make room for Him in our hearts and lives, there will be room for everything that is for our good and only the things that would do us spiritual harm will be driven out. Only as we make room for Jesus will Christmas have real meaning for us.

Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem, but Mary lived in Nazareth, eighty miles away. "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," and He always finds a way in which to fulfill His prophecies and His promises.

St. Luke tells us in the chapter from which our text is taken that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. This enrollment was a kind of a census. Some of you will remember that in 1920 the United States took a census of all the people living in our

country. The censustakers, as they are usually called, went from door to door and enrolled all the people. But in the census of Caesar Augustus they used a different method. Instead of census-takers going around to the homes of the people, the people had to go to the native town of their family or clan to be enrolled.

That is the reason why Joseph and Mary started out from Nazareth and began the long journey of eighty miles to go to Bethlehem, the city of David, because Joseph "was of the house and family of David," as you can see by reading the first chapter of St. Matthew and the third chapter of St. Luke, chapters which are not often read on account of the hard names found in them.

When they arrived at Bethlehem they were very tired, but to their surprise they found out that there was no room for them in the inn. Joseph looked around for a place of shelter, but the best he could do was to take Mary to a stable, a rude cavern cut out of the hillside, where travelers kept their oxen and other beasts used in traveling, and here they found shelter for the night.

Little thought the people who crowded the inn and the homes of Bethlehem, that the greatest event in the world's history was to take place during that "holy night, peaceful night." It was then that Jesus was born, and Mary "wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger."

Only those to whom God made known the fact were aware of the Saviour's birth. Among these were the shepherds on Judaea's plains, who were

keeping watch over their flocks by night. To them, because of their beautiful and simple faith, God sent an angel with the message: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."

And then a great angel choir sang the "Gloria in Excelsis" for these devout shepherds, filling their souls with joy. They hastened into the village, "and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger."

Let us hope that some one soon offered a more suitable and comfortable place for the mother and child. At least, when the Magi came to worship the Child Jesus, St. Matthew says, "they came into the house." No doubt some devout worshipers of God and believers in His promises opened their home and their hearts to the Word made flesh.

I hope none of you will be so taken up at this season with your preparations for Christmas as to forget the Christ in whose honor the day is named. Let it not be said of you that there is no room for Him in your life.

It is said that there was to be a christening in a fashionable family. Many guests were invited. They came dressed in the latest styles. Their wraps and cloaks were carried to the bed room and laid upon the beds. After spending some time in conversation they made ready for the baptism. Some

one asked, "Where is the child?" The nurse went upstairs for the baby, but quickly returned, running down the steps and crying: "The baby is dead; it was smothered by the wraps of the guests!" The chief thing for which they came was forgotten, neglected, destroyed.

Do not smother the Christ in your care and concern about many things at this Christmastide. Make room for Jesus.

A story comes to us from away down in South Africa, where a missionary spoke to two little black Zulu boys about Jesus and His love. One of them went home to his mistress, and when she asked him what he had heard, he said, "Oh, it was about a wonderful Man. The people were very unkind to Him, and He died and went up to heaven; but He came down again and was like a little child in people's hearts." Then the lady said, "Well, and what did you do?" With shining face the boy replied, "I opened my heart and let the little Child Christ come in; and He came in, and my heart closed over Him, and He is safe inside."

There was no room for Jesus in the inn. Is there room for Him in your heart?

LII.

LOOKING BACKWARD AND FORWARD

"Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal."—PHIL. 3:14.

AS we come to the end of another year and stand at the door of a new year that will soon open before us, it is well to take a backward and a forward look. In our text, St. Paul speaks of his attitude toward the past, the present and the future. He wants to forget the things that are past; he wants to stretch forward to the things that are future; therefore his present duty is to press on toward the goal.

Are there any things of this year that you want to forget? Did you think some thoughts, speak some words, or do some things during the year, that you wish you hadn't done and that you would like to forget? The only way to have no regrets when the end of the year comes is to do your best every day during the year. It is too late at the end of the year to recover what you have lost. You may revisit old scenes, reopen old books, go to see old friends, but you can never live over again a year that is ended.

Now that the year is about at its close, it will not do much good to spend your time in regrets for the past. It is worth much more to profit by your past

mistakes and to do better in the future. Like St. Paul, forget the things which are behind and stretch forward to the things which are before.

But there is one thing we must bear in mind. You will not be the same when you go into the new year that you were when you came into this year. This year will be a part of yourself when you go into the new year. As a tree gathers up all the growths of the past years and contains them in itself, so your life is the sum and substance of all your past. Although you forget the things which are past, you will carry the past with you into the future.

In a few days we shall all turn a new leaf, and a new year will be before us to make of it whatever we will. How would it be if, as you stretch forward to the things which are before you, you would leave something ugly behind you—some bad temper, some little mean or selfish way, some bad habit—and put something good in its place? Do you not think the coming year would be much better and happier than this one has been?

Once there were three little boys who played at having "white" days. A "white" day was a day in which they did nothing naughty, and seven "white" days made a "white" week. What a grand thing it would be if you would make up your mind to make the new year a "white" year! All you need to do is to make each day of the year a "white" day.

It will be a great help to those who make and break New Year resolutions to think of what Dr. Johnson said in his old age: "I have been resolv-

ing these fifty-five years; now I take hold on God." The chief thing in stretching forward to the things which are before is to do your present duty, to press on toward the goal day by day. If you take the main thought of St. Paul in the verses from which our text is taken—his real resolution—you will find that it is this: "One thing I do * * * I press on toward the goal." And what a wonderful goal it is: "unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

A goal is an aim, a mark, a prize, an ideal toward which you are working. Every boy and girl ought to have an ideal in life. Whatever you want to become, to make of yourself, to do as your lifework, you can have no higher ideal than "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

I heard a story not long ago which will help you to understand a little better what is meant by an ideal. A little girl, who lived in an alley, took a walk into the park. She was a poor little girl, and not very clean. Her hair was uncombed and matted, her face was dirty, her dress was torn and untidy, her stockings were hanging down over her shoes. As she went along in the park she came to the beautiful statue of a little girl about her size. The little girl of the statue had a sweet face that was pure and white, as only marble could be, her hair was very nicely combed, her dress was clean and hung in graceful folds, her stockings were in place, and her shoes were neat and clean. As the little girl looked at the statue she began to stroke and smooth out her hair, she brushed off her dress with her hands, she

pulled up her stockings, and improved her looks as much as she could.

The statue was her ideal, and as she went home she made up her mind that she would keep herself more clean and tidy, and I am sure she became a better and happier girl. If you make Jesus your ideal, as St. Paul did, you will strive to become more like Him every day, and your life and character will grow more beautiful throughout the years.

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